



Hunger for Change:

A Faithful Response to Food Insecurity

Facilitator Overview

Hunger for Change

General Overview

Important Note: Please log in to your JustFaith Ministries account to access resources and materials for your program. Regularly visit your account to keep up-to-date. Remind participants to log in for their program materials.

Welcome to this JustFaith Ministries JustMatters module. As facilitator, you play a key role in nurturing respectful dialogue, active listening, and thoughtful reflection on the vital and sensitive human reality of food insecurity. We thank you for embracing this important work.

This module seeks to create a new movement of solidarity between Christians with sufficient access to food and those experiencing food insecurity, in the U.S. and around the world. By fostering active listening, dialogue, and prayer, it creates a group experience of trust and compassion. By fostering new learning from articles, online viewing, and a resource book, it lends new insights to participants' awareness of the causes and consequences of food insecurity. By encouraging new spiritual practices and actions, it cultivates an expanding community of Christians who are in action to end hunger in our world.

From the beginning, invite group members to make a strong commitment to dialogue, active listening, spiritual practices, and actions. This may stretch the comfort zone of all participants, including you as facilitators. Trying to live into these practices (and they are practices, no one gets them right all the time) holds promise for great reward as you build relationships within the group.

This process may challenge not only participants' – but also your own – thinking about food insecurity, its causes, its impact, and viable steps to eliminate it. You may also find the group challenged while reflecting on the impact of our consumption habits. A large part of your role as facilitator involves encouraging group members both to share and be open to new perspectives. As much as possible, encourage members to be open about their struggles and challenges. You will encounter participants who disagree with specific perspectives or interpretations. This is natural and will serve as fodder for conversation in the group. Be open to the benefit of respectful dialogue that springs from personal experience.

This guide contains everything you will need to facilitate the module, from session schedules and scripts to lists of supplies. Please read the notes well in advance of each session to help you prepare. They will provide information pertinent to the focus and flow of the session and the entire process. You will also have access to the **Participant Packet** in your online account.

This module may be led by one or two facilitators. If you are sharing the role of facilitator with another person, make sure both of you have read this Facilitator Overview. Co-facilitators should meet before beginning the module to talk about the eight sessions, the preparation for weekly prayer, speaker and immersion organization, and other details in the program. You will need to be keenly aware of the group

dynamics and to guide the process so that participants are stretched, but not so far that they feel unable to participate. It is important for you and your co-facilitator to “check in” with each other throughout the process and, if necessary, address any concerns you may have. In addition, it is important to divide facilitation tasks between the two of you ahead of time. You could divide tasks within a session or take turns leading entire sessions. Even when you are not “on” as facilitator, be flexible and ready to support your co-facilitator.

Session Preparations and Facilitation

You do not have to be an expert on the topic or have years of experience working in groups to be a good facilitator. You do need to consider what is best for the group and remind group members of their shared responsibility to each other. Make the **Group Guidelines** visible during your first few sessions to assist you in reminding each other. Familiarize yourself with the material, including the online videos, before the module begins. It is also helpful to go over each session ahead of time and have a clear plan. Preparation will make a huge difference in how the process unfolds. At the same time, there is no perfect process – be flexible. Not everything needs to be done exactly as planned. Keep in mind the overall theme of each week within the context of the broader flow of the program. Each session lasts 2 ½ hours. Be particularly attentive to details for Session One; it sets the tone for the rest of the program. Arrive early enough each session to set up the meeting space so that you can greet each person as they arrive.

Timeframes listed on the opening page of the session outlines are approximate; use them as a guide. Don’t worry about being exact, but do keep the process moving. Your role as facilitator includes drawing out those who speak little and ensuring that no one dominates the conversation. Use gentle reminders or invitations to participants to help ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute. These phrases may help move the conversation:

- “We are looking here for a number of short ‘popcorn’ style responses to these questions.”
- “I’m looking for phrases or one-minute or less responses.”
- “This is an interesting discussion. Should we adjust the schedule to continue?”
- “I would like the group’s permission to wrap up this discussion.”
- If discomfort becomes overwhelming, you might say: “Let’s pause to pray in silence and allow the space needed to move on.”
- “We’ve come to the end of our allotted time. Let’s just pause for a moment of silence.”

Throughout the course of the process, people may suggest activities (e.g., “We should read X.” or “Let’s have a discussion about Y issue.”). We encourage you to keep a running list of these suggestions and ideas and make them available during the final session when the group discusses possible next steps.

Activities between Sessions

This module involves not only the sessions together, but also activities designed for participants to undertake in the days between sessions. In addition to the readings, there is a spiritual practice each week, and some weeks there are suggested actions for participants to take on individually or as a group. These are

an important part of the overall experience; be willing to do them yourself and encourage participants to do them. Make sure to affirm participation each week as you invite feedback on the practices.

Your online facilitator account provides valuable links to online videos which range in time from about 3 to 45 minutes. Your group will view some of these during sessions; however, the majority are scheduled for viewing at home. Throughout this process, it is very important to have internet access wherever you have your sessions. All videos in this module must be either streamed directly for viewing, or downloaded from the web and viewed.

Participant Accounts and Supplemental Materials

Invite participants to create a user account on the JustFaith Ministries website. To do so, click on the button on your facilitator page that says “Invite Participants” and enter their email addresses. Once the account is created, participants will have access to a participant page that contains the **Participant Packet** with general information about the module, group guidelines, and instructions on session preparations; links to videos; and some additional readings. These materials supplement the book used in the program, *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*, and seek to broaden the scope of perspectives offered in the module. It is important that you invite participants to access their online account. Encourage participants to print the **Participant Packet** as your group begins its eight-week journey. As facilitator, you will have access to all of the contents of the participant page, as well as facilitator documents.

Group Guidelines and Dialogue Principles

Hunger for Change, like all JustFaith Ministries processes, involves cultivating a deep respect for dialogue, emphasizing the value of hearing and valuing each person’s contributions. Dialogue is distinct from debate: its purpose is to open each person to the perspective and wisdom of the others. Dialogue involves respectfully hearing the story or perspective of another without judgment, without counter-argument, without analyzing, and without succumbing to the temptation to fix or to comment. Session One contains a set of guidelines for you to review with the participants, who also have them in Session One of their **Participant Packet**. In addition, review the Mutual Invitation Method with the group during Session One.

The Mutual Invitation Method is a highly effective aid to dialogue, ensuring that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, and will serve as the preferred way of engaging in large- or small-group discussion. It involves the following process:

A designated person shares first. After that person has spoken, he or she invites another participant to share. This can be anyone in the room and should not follow a pattern, e.g., the person next to the speaker. After the second person has spoken, that person invites another participant, who has not yet spoken, to share. This process continues until everyone has been invited to speak. People may choose to pass if they wish. After everyone has been invited to speak, anyone who has passed is given another opportunity to respond prior to going to a second round.

Note that the total amount of time allotted to answer a question is divided among the participants so that all can be assured of some time to share. The first time you use this technique with the group may feel

awkward. The tendency is to give up on the process and go back to the “whoever-wants-to-talk-can-talk” way. Being persistent in using this process helps the group to eventually get used to it and even have fun with it. This process addresses differences in the perception of personal power among the participants. Some people will be eager for their turn, while others will be reluctant to speak when they are invited.

If a person speaks very briefly and then does not remember to invite the next person, do not invite for him or her. Simply point out that this person has the privilege to invite the next person to speak. This is especially important if a person “passes.” By ensuring that the person still has the privilege to invite, you affirm and value that person independent of that person’s choice to share or not share at this time.

(From Eric Law, *The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993), p. 106.)

The SNAP Challenge

To help participants gain understanding of the experience of those living with food insecurity in the U.S., we include the SNAP Challenge as the recommended spiritual practice between Sessions Three and Four. Since 2008, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) has been the name for the federal Food Stamp program, which is administered by the US Department of Agriculture to alleviate hunger and malnutrition. Families eligible to receive SNAP gain an increase in the food purchasing power of their household through this program.

The SNAP Challenge is to live on the average food stamp benefit amount, which is about \$1.80 per person per meal (for a family of 4). It will give you and your group insight into the struggle that millions of low-income Americans face to obtain food. Note that people receiving SNAP benefits do not typically have a stocked pantry or a variety of seasonings with which to supplement their cooking. Living on the average food stamp benefit will lead you to face difficult challenges and decisions about what to purchase on such a limited budget. Finding healthy, nutritious food will likely be a struggle with such limited resources. It is important to note that many who rely on SNAP benefits are limited not only by the amount of money they have to make purchases, but also very often by the selection they have wherever they are purchasing. For example, if they live in a food desert, where they must buy food from a convenience store, even if they have money and desire to buy fresh food, the only options available to them may be packaged processed foods. It will also be important to remind participants that doing this challenge is a *choice* that they, as people of privilege, get to make. Those who rely on SNAP benefits do so because they are limited in their choices.

Details on the SNAP Challenge are included in the **Participant Packet, Session One** and in your facilitator notes for Session One. Introduce the SNAP Challenge during the first session, so that participants have time to discuss participating in it with others in their household.

Inviting a Guest Speaker

A key aspect of all JustFaith Ministries programs is the opportunity to enter into the story of others’ lives. In this module, you do this in part by hearing from people who have experienced food insecurity, and from

those who support efforts to transform communities where residents experience obstacles to food security. Session Four includes a guest speaker; Session Six is an immersion experience for the group.

Consider taking one or more of the following steps when seeking a speaker to address your group:

- Contact your local association of food banks to locate a food bank near you who will be able to recommend a speaker.
- Contact your Bread for the World regional representative to recommend a speaker on domestic food insecurity:
- Contact your Catholic Relief Services (CRS) regional representative to recommend a local speaker on international food insecurity, one who has visited areas of food insecurity and can speak to what he/she witnessed:
- Contact your local Catholic Diocesan Office to speak with somebody from its Office of Peace and Justice / Office of Respect Life and Human Dignity to obtain a recommendation for a speaker on local or global food insecurity.

Once you have identified a speaker, take the time to orient him/her to the module so he/she is aware of the larger context of the conversation. Be sure that the speaker understands the module's focus on (a) the root causes of food insecurity in the U.S. and abroad, and (b) the challenge to unquestioned structures around consumption. Offer these questions as guidance for the speaker:

- What is your experience with food insecurity?
- Who does your organization serve and can you share some stories of people you've worked with who are or were struggling with food insecurity?
- How does your organization address food insecurity?
- What can we do, individually or as a group, to address food insecurity?

Allow approximately one hour for your guest, including a Q & A segment. Either prepare a Thank You card in advance to give to the speaker or send one after his/her visit.

Immersion Experience

The immersion experience is an essential part of this eight-week module. It is designed to invite participants to encounter a local organization to learn from those involved with the issue of food insecurity. The overall flow of the immersion is as follows:

1. Gathering together to reflect on Scripture to provide a prayerful context for the session.
2. Removing the group from its regular meeting place and intentionally traveling to a location that may be, for some, unfamiliar and even a little uncomfortable. This voluntary displacement may not be a common occurrence for some group members.
3. Meeting with and conversing with people who are dealing with food insecurity in their community; hearing and sharing stories; building common ground; hearing about the systemic challenges of the

city or state situation. This step is crucial to the immersion day. It may include sharing a simple meal together, if appropriate.

4. Returning to the group's meeting place to process and draw insights from the experience.

Below are some suggestions for your immersion. Refer also to the resources in "Inviting a Speaker" above.

- Arrange to visit with workers, volunteers, and those receiving assistance from a St. Vincent de Paul, Salvation Army, or other local food pantry or soup kitchen.
- Contact one of the local community organizing groups who work with migrants, arranging for a visit with some of the migrants in order to understand the particular links between migrant realities and food insecurity.
- Contact someone from a local community organizing group that engages in advocacy around food insecurity. Ask them to arrange for a meeting between your group and some of their local leaders who experience or are involved with local efforts to address hunger.
- Arrange to visit a food bank and to speak with those who work there about their work with food insecurity. As part of the visit, walk through the food bank, listing what you would use to feed your family if this was all you had (Remember to exclude everything—spices, herbs, oils, butter, margarine, cereals, vegetables, fruit, beans or other canned food items—already in your cabinets at home). Bring your insights from this exercise to conversation with the people you meet there.
- Find out from your local Catholic Charities office if they have any projects locally involving food security, such as a farmers' market run by refugee families, a community garden run by people who reside in an impoverished area, or similar project. Arrange to visit, offer to participate in some of the day's work, and to meet and converse with those involved with the project.
- Food deserts are a significant problem for lower-income residents in urban areas. If you live in a city that has decided to address the problem of food deserts by creating community markets, contact some of the city council members and ask for their help in arranging for you to meet some of those who both work in and benefit from the community market.

Prayer

The call to a quiet, reflective, prayerful space is an integral part of all JustFaith Ministries programs. Each session includes an opening and closing prayer experience; scripts and instructions are included in the session outlines. These provide a transition from participants' daily routine into a place of deep listening and sharing from the heart. Create a welcoming space that fosters an attitude of reverence. Choose some simple reflective music to set the tone.

Invite everyone in the group to put aside other things and enter the prayer as a place where the group becomes one community – unhurried, fully present, and attentive. Set up the space, including the prayer table with symbols, early, so that you are ready to welcome participants as they arrive. Make the closing prayer the last activity of each session; avoid making additional announcements or continuing with business or group discussion after it. It is intended to bring the session to a prayerful completion. Be attentive to the ending time and avoid overlooking or short-changing this time of prayerful togetherness.

From Insight to Action

Insight without action is of little or no value. Therefore, this process encourages participants to commit to specific actions both during and after the module as a result of their experience. During the second half of the process, you will suggest that participants adopt an action that places them in solidarity with people who struggle with food insecurity. In Sessions Seven and Eight, the group will spend time discerning together which actions you might take individually or as a group. It is highly recommended that the final session involve plans to continue participation in local, national, or international advocacy efforts.

Additionally, your group is encouraged to participate in the community Facebook page created for Hunger for Change participants. This Facebook page will allow your group to connect with other groups around the country who want to see an end to food insecurity. A link to this Facebook page is in your online account.

At various points in the program, you will be prompted to share pictures, stories, successes, and challenges from your Hunger for Change experience. The Facebook community page will continue even after you are finished with the module, allowing you and your group to stay informed, connected to, and encouraged by others who seek an end to hunger. You'll be prompted to use the hashtags **#endhunger**, **#justfaithministries**, and **#whatchanged4me** when you post.