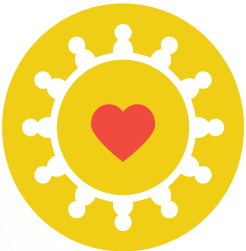


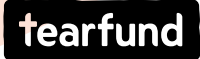
CANADIAN FOODGRAINS BANK IS A PARTNERSHIP OF 15 CANADIAN CHURCHES AND CHURCH-BASED AGENCIES WORKING TOGETHER TO END GLOBAL HUNGER THROUGH:

- Emergency food assistance in times of crisis
- Long term responses to improve household food security
- Engaging Canadians and governments toward meaningful change



# AND IT WAS SO

## NATIONAL YOUTH PROJECT



[foodgrainsbank.ca](http://foodgrainsbank.ca)



# INTRODUCTION

**THE NATIONAL YOUTH PROJECT** aims to help youth focus on learning about a particular social justice issue of concern. It is a joint project of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) and the Anglican Church of Canada (ACC).

The National Youth Project seeks to encourage youth participation through:

- learning and raising awareness about an issue;
- action and engagement at the local level;
- advocacy;
- raising financial support for a particular project; and
- prayer, reflection and worship.

The phrase “And it was so” originates from Genesis 1, where it is used to signify the completion and fulfillment of Creation. Each time God speaks a part of creation into existence, the phrase is used to confirm that what was spoken has come to pass as intended—an affirmation of Creation’s power and purpose.

For the National Youth Project, the title “And it was so” draws on this theme of bringing something into existence: the abundance and presence of God in all of Creation and symbolizing that young people, through their collective action and commitment, have the power to bring about meaningful change. “And it was so” underscores the belief that, by taking action, youth can create a better world, just as creation was made with intention and purpose.

***“And it was so” signifies hope, empowerment, and the idea that the efforts of today— will lead to a tangible and positive future.***

It serves as a reminder that the steps taken now, as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, in collaboration with partners like Alongside Hope, Canadian Lutheran World Relief and the Foodgrains Bank, will manifest into real, impactful change—whether in the fight against hunger, fostering sustainability, or promoting social justice.

## About Canadian Foodgrains Bank

This resource is produced by Canadian Foodgrains Bank, in collaboration with 2 of it’s members, Alongside Hope and Canadian Lutheran World Relief. The Foodgrains Bank is a partnership of 15 Canadian churches and church-based agencies who are working together to end hunger.

Our story started in the mid-1970s when Canadian farmers were looking for a way to share their grain with people facing hunger around the world. Government policies at the time did not make this easy so the farmers called on Mennonite Central Committee Canada (MCCC) to find a way to help. MCCC decided to create a food bank that could receive grains from Canadian farmers and send to those experiencing hunger around the world. This bank was based on the “Joseph principle” from the Old Testament which promotes the storing of grain in good years for use in bad times.

The Canadian government agreed to provide matching funds for this new food bank and encouraged the MCCC food bank to invite other churches to join. Other Christian denominations and agencies began to join resulting in the establishment of Canadian Foodgrains Bank in 1983.

Initially, grains were shipped from Canada. However, following advocacy efforts led by the Foodgrains Bank, the Canadian government ended the condition that stated that food for aid internationally must be purchased in and shipped from Canada. Since then, money raised by grain donated by farmers in Canada, cash donations from the public and the matching funds from the

Canadian government are used to purchase food closer to the area of need.

***Today, the Foodgrains Bank is one of the largest multi-denominational Christian agencies in Canada and an official partner of the Canadian government for delivering emergency food assistance around the world.***

***Through this network, Alongside Hope and Canadian Lutheran World Relief are currently working in 7 countries, with 8 local partner organizations.***

Our network supports dozens of partners around the world to deliver emergency assistance (for instance when food is not available due to a natural disaster or a crisis) and to work with people to grow more food and improve their livelihoods in the longer-term.

Together we learn from and with our members and local partners as we navigate complexities in our changing world. We connect with Canadians through speaking events, workshops and learning resources so that they are engaged to take informed action for change. When it is safe to travel internationally, we invite Canadians to travel with us on Food Security Learning Tours and host international visitors so that Canadians can learn more about the international projects that we support and deepen their understanding of food security.

We welcome you to join us in our mission to end hunger!




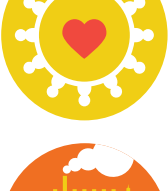




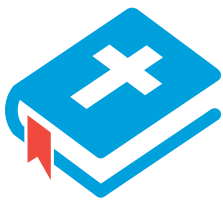
# How to Use this Resource:

This resource for youth and young adult groups includes 6 themes, each with its own selection of “Food for Thought” facts, suggestions for Bible study, group reflection questions, and hands-on experiential learning activities, as well as a closing prayer.

It is intended to offer a diversity of topics and types of activities, that can vary in length depending on the size, age or learning style of your group participants. This resource is meant to be used all or in part, alongside the fundraising portal found at [www.claygathering.ca/nyp](http://www.claygathering.ca/nyp)

## Overview of the 6 Themes in this Resource:

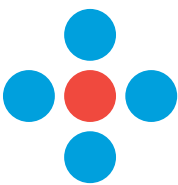
	THEME	GROUP LEARNING OBJECTIVES
	Finding Hope in the Abundance of Creation	Where food comes from, abundance of Creation, food and our relationship to it
	Getting at the Root Causes of Hunger	What is food security, root causes of hunger
	From Local to Global – Make a Difference from a Distance	Means to address food insecurity, global nature of the food system, connections between domestic and international food assistance
	Gratitude, Hospitality and Inclusion	How to express gratitude for food and community, ways to build community and inclusion around food and table
	Bridging the Urban/ Rural Divide	Commonalities between all farmers, building bridges across the divide between urban/rural folks and church communities
	Speaking Up & Out	Advocacy as part of Christian faith, importance of youth participation in calling on our government for change



## How to Lead Invitational Bible Studies

**Lectio Divina** – (Latin for Sacred Reading) is a traditional contemplative practice that helps us to slow down, to engage with Scripture in an entry-level way, and to dialogue with God. There are 4 suggested readings for each theme.

- Start by explaining that this way of reflecting through Scripture is about getting quiet in our minds, comfortable in our bodies, and listening for God.
- Read the scripture the first time. Announce that there will be a few minutes for silent reflection before hearing the passage again.
- Read the same passage for a second time. Invite everyone to listen this time for the word or phrase that stands out for them - What word or phrase is God giving you in this moment? Pause for a couple of minutes to allow for silent reflection.
- Go around the circle and invite each person to say the word or phrase that God has given them (if they want to).
- Read the passage a 3rd time and say that the time has come to talk with God in prayer about what it means—the word or phrase that stands out to you, and the feelings that come with it—and to listen for a response. If your mind begins to wander, re-focus on your word or phrase, and God’s presence in the moment. Pause for a couple of minutes again for more silent reflection.
- Together, say this Closing Prayer:  
*God, thank you for your Word, may we carry it with us, as we move into and through the next week and often be brought back to the feeling of resting in your loving arms. In Jesus’ name, Amen.*



## Facilitating Group Discussion & Reflection

*The job of the discussion leader is to “draw out” participants into conversation, to establish safe space in the room so they can engage in the topic and share their own perspective.*

This is a bit like starting a fire, where each expression of curiosity, patience and deep listening is like putting extra wood into the fire to keep it going. Everyone brings a bit of fuel to add to the fire, sharing what they feel, think or know in reference to the topic. There are no right or wrong answers here.

*DO be flexible with how you prepare youth to reflect, practice self-disclosure, think critically, and engage in these discussion questions, ultimately towards group discovery, and cohesiveness.*

Experiment with having participants reflect on the question silently at first, then jotting down or drawing their ideas in a journal, or handing out sticky notes to capture their ideas, or having someone capture the big ideas on a whiteboard or flipchart paper.

Ideally your group would engage with 1 or 2 of the suggested questions per session, however the length of discussion time per question will vary a lot, depending on your group and their own interests. Some may generate so much discussion you need to pick-it up again at a later time!

Before beginning any group reflection, establish some guidelines for good discussion together. Consider posting theme in the space throughout. Examples include:

- Listen with respect.
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.

- Each person gets a chance to talk. Try not to speak until others have had a chance to add to the conversation.
- One person talks at a time. Don't cut people off.
- It is ok if not everyone is comfortable sharing in front of a group.
- Personal stories stay in the group, unless we all agree it is ok to share them.
- It is everyone's job to help make the discussion constructive.

## How to Lead Group Learning Activities

Within each theme, the suggested activities vary a lot, and include shorter classroom-style activities, hands-on exercises, and more involved suggestions for guest speakers, group outings and field trips.

Some of the selected activities are part of other resources, and the links to download them are embedded within this resource.

**While we encourage you to stick to the activity suggestions provided, feel free to be creative!**  
All the basic information you need for these sessions is included in this guide, with additional suggested resources available at [www.foodgrainsbank.ca/clay](http://www.foodgrainsbank.ca/clay).

As a wide variety of activities are offered in this resource, the time needed for each will range from as little as 30-45 minutes, to several hours. Don't hesitate to reach out for enrichment ideas, technical support, prayer, or even a general pep talk.

Foodgrains Bank staff will be hosting periodic trainings for group leaders on how to facilitate some of the larger activities, as well as deepen engagement

and interaction with the simpler ones. You can access guest speakers, support, or information about upcoming training workshops by sending an email to [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca).



## How to Lead Advocacy Activities

After exploring the previous 5 themes in this resource related to global poverty and hunger, members of the group are encouraged to take action. Intended for use throughout the entire National Youth Project, participants can communicate with elected officials about their thoughts on Canada's role in making the world a better place.

**F**ood is a necessity of life, a gift from God, a tangible reminder of God's provision and abundance. All of Creation depends on the nutrients it provides – for energy and growth. From the very beginning, in the Garden of Eden, God established food as a blessing, providing Adam and Eve with every tree bearing fruit for their sustenance.

Using the sun and rain, soil and seeds, The Creator fills the earth with a wide variety of plants and animals, each uniquely designed not only to nourish and satisfy, but to contribute to the regenerative and interdependent cycles of life around them. The food we eat is more than a commodity or sustenance, but a reflection of God's care for all Creation, and desire to share the beauty of this natural world with all people.



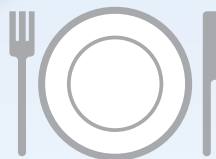
# FINDING HOPE IN THE ABUNDANCE OF CREATION



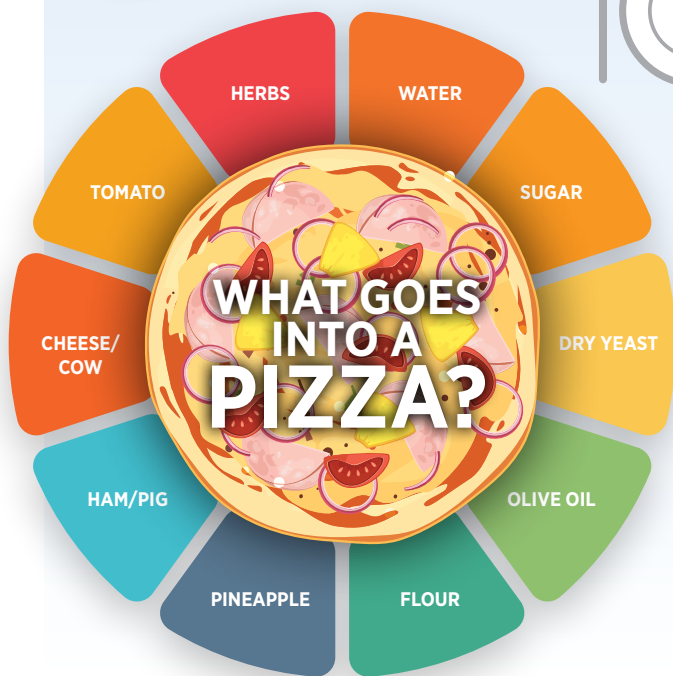
# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



**KEY TERM(S):** Food systems include all the ways food is grown, gathered, harvested, processed, delivered, accessed and consumed and how these intersect with health, the environment, economy and society. Our current food system fails to meet the needs of most people or our planet.



The average Canadian consumes **3400-3600 calories** (kcal) per day



## Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- Genesis 1:1-31
- Psalm 104
- Matthew 6: 1-14
- Mark 8:14-21



## Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. What are all the aspects of Creation (not made by humans)? How are they interrelated or depend on one another?
2. How do our choices as people affect Creation? Do changes in one part of the food system effect the others? How?
3. What responsibility do people have to care for Creation, to produce, consume and share food in a way that reflects God's love?
4. What would it be like to eat EVERY meal, (whether simple or fancy) with the intention of recognizing that the food we are eating in that moment is a reflection of God's love?



## Learning Activities for this Theme:



1. Create an art mural, collage of pictures, or build a prayer labyrinth that depict and celebrate the goodness of Creation and all the elements of our food system.
2. Plan a group outing to a large-scale grocery store in your community. Divide into small groups (each with a pen and paper) and challenge them to:
  - Write down all the words or phrases used to capture your attention about the goodness of food products.

- What general food, health or nutrition trends did you notice?
  - Randomly select 1 product from each section in the store and review the list of ingredients and write down all words you don't understand, and what country the product came from.
3. Organize a visit for your group with a local grain, cattle, chicken or pig farmer. Before the visit, take the group to the grocery store and look at all offerings of what the farmer produces, noting the selection, price, and countries of origin available. At the farm, talk with the farmer about what is involved in their work, their faith, and their joys and challenges in caring for Creation and growing food.
  4. Draw a detailed "map" of your favorite meal: research and note the origins of all the ingredients, the food miles involved for each item, and all the relationships and resources (water, energy, fuel, human or animal labour) involved in its production, processing and transport from field to your fork. How do you think food transportation impacts climate?
  5. Start a community, container or roof-top garden at your church, or join others already doing this in the neighbourhood nearest you. Make drawings or take photos to monitor growth of things the group plants.
  6. Invite a speaker to educate the group on Indigenous and settler history/land relations, their traditional ecological knowledge about food, and how it is impacted by current realities, such as climate change.

# Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 1:

**Voices 1:** God, you created the world and said that it was good!

**Voices 2:** And then you called your human creations to be stewards of what was created.

**Voices 1:** God, as caretakers, we are called to manage the abundance that surrounds us, but we know that our stewardship has been found lacking.

**Voices 2:** May we always walk gently upon the Earth, in right relationship, nurtured by your love, open to the wind of the Spirit, taking only what we need, always open to the needs of others.

**Voices 1:** Inspire us to make choices that bring well-being, and that are mindful of the generations who will come after us.

**Voices 2:** Help us to recognize our proper place as part of your Creation.

**ALL:** Grant us the strength and perseverance, for such a radical transformation into your Kingdom. May it be so. Amen.

*~ adapted from prayers posted on the Third Space website*

## NOTES

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**J**ust as Jesus instructed his disciples to take what they had and feed everyone who was there in the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, so also are we called to provide food for all people. Over and over again, Jesus’ teachings highlight how having a compassionate heart for justice, and caring for those in need is a reflection of loving Christ Himself.

Hunger is not just a physical need but also a moral issue, and Christians are called to actively work towards alleviating it, recognizing that it reflects the larger issues of systemic injustice. It is not just the responsibility of farmers, or grocery stores, or governments. While it is true that hunger is tied to complex issues like climate change, poverty and inequality, conflict and power; Jesus makes it really quite simple and clear—take only what you need and share the rest.



# GETTING AT THE ROOT CAUSES OF HUNGER

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**KEY TERM(S):** Food security exists when all people, at all times, have regular access to enough nutritious food to lead healthy and active lives.

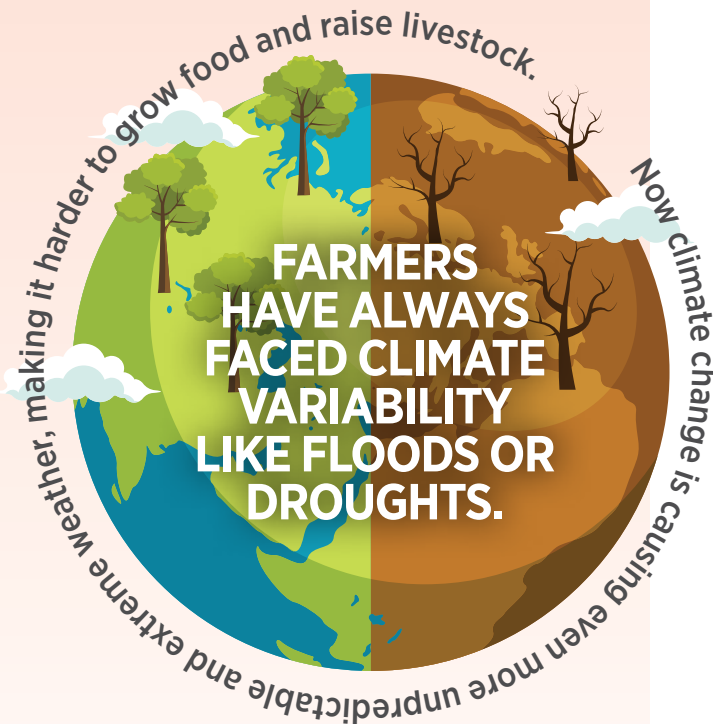
People who are forced to flee, often carry very little with them, or have no money, or markets to buy food from, and farming is no longer safe.



## A BREAKDOWN

in any part of the food system can cause people to go hungry.

UP TO **720** MILLION PEOPLE  
in the world experience hunger.



Groups facing **DISCRIMINATION**, experience a disproportionate amount of hunger due to poverty.



### Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- Isaiah 58:6-7, 9-12
- Deuteronomy 8: 1-9
- Luke 6:17-23
- Romans 12:14-21



### Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. Who in our world has the most food? Who has the least?
2. How does the media shape what we think and know about hunger in the world, and why it exists?
3. How do you feel when you see images of extreme wealth/excess vs. scarcity/lack? What kind of images are used to represent them on television and social media?
4. How do we live with less than what we think we need so that others can simply live? What could individuals, communities, businesses and governments do?
3. Invite a poverty/social welfare activist to speak about causes, impacts and solutions of poverty and food insecurity in your region.
4. Watch [Conflict & Hunger video](#) together, then do a [Forced to Flee](#) simulation.
5. Invite a community dietician to educate your group about the differences between caloric needs and caloric content of the food we eat, as well as what is enough for good health, and what factors influence our sense of what is enough.
6. Have each group member watch 30 minutes of TV during the week (include a variety of channels and content such as commercials, news stories and children's programs), and make a list of all references to food, noting the words and messages. Reflect as a group on what you find.



### Learning Activities for this Theme:



1. Do the activity [Filling the Bowls](#) – a brief exercise to demonstrate how some people have few difficulties in accessing food, while others face many challenges. Then watch the [“What is Food Security”](#) video.
2. Play the [Breaking the Cycle of Hunger game](#) (online version OR print out the gameboard), to understand the challenges faced by small-scale (subsistence) farmers in the developing world. As they move around the game board, students will discover how different factors, such as economics and climate, affect small-scale farmers.

**Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 2:**

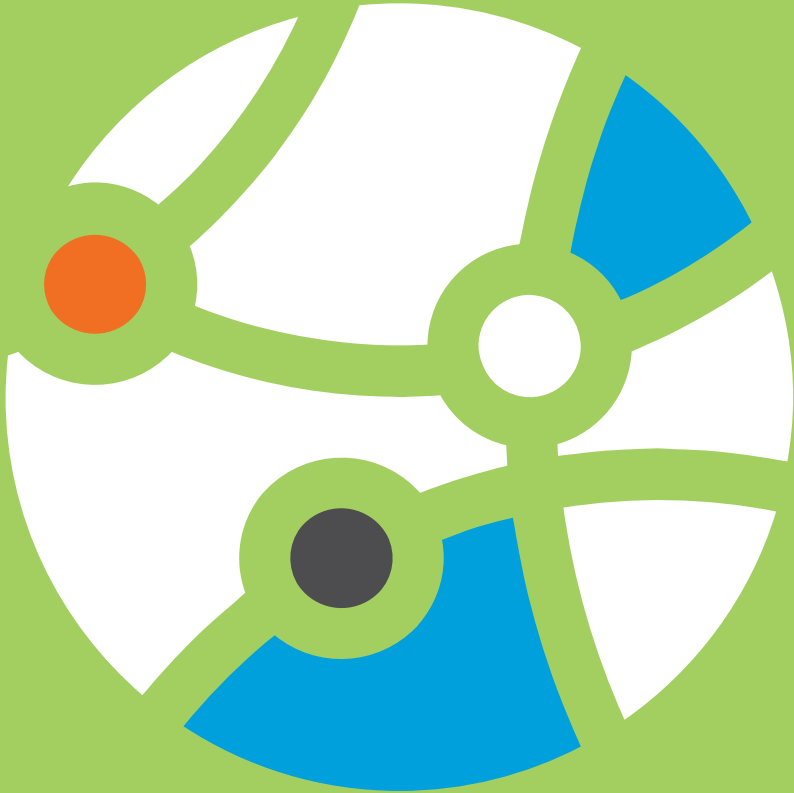
- Voices 1:** O God of the mustard seed; tilt the scales: that those experiencing hunger and poverty will see justice.
- Voices 2:** Share the feast, and bless those who work in fields and gardens, O God of Eden’s abundant garden: that each crop may flourish and fetch a fair price.
- Voices 1:** Upset the tables, O God of the upside-down Kingdom: that the least can benefit fairly from their trade.
- Voices 2:** Open our eyes, O God of life in all its fullness: that we may learn to walk the way of your Son tilting, sharing, upsetting this world as we know it,
- Voices 1:** May we not be satisfied until the products we bring to our table give a better deal, to all who hunger for one,
- ALL:** and that the fruits of Your Creation may be shared justly with everyone who needs them, May it be so. Amen.

*~ adapted from The Fairtrade Foundation website*

**NOTES**

From a Christian perspective, the interconnectedness of our global food system reveals God’s design for creation, emphasizing stewardship, community, and shared responsibility. This calls for a sustainable and equitable approach to food production and distribution, acknowledging that our actions in one part of the world can impact others, ensuring that all have access to the food they need.

Moreover, the interconnectedness of global food systems reflects God’s vision for a world where all people live in harmony with creation. Christians are encouraged to see their role in food systems not only as consumers but as part of a larger ecological and social web. By building community, and fostering a sense of global solidarity, Christians are reminded that they are part of a divine plan for justice, peace, and ecological balance, where all creation is cared for and nourished in love, and all are fed – no exceptions.



FROM  
LOCAL TO  
GLOBAL  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
FROM A DISTANCE

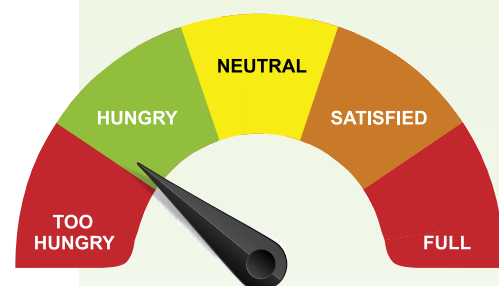


# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**KEY TERM(S):** Food assistance, and nutrition assistance can be delivered in many different ways and provides families with needed support to survive and recover from an emergency.

## LONGER TERM WORK

aims to help people to provide food for themselves. This includes promoting sustainable farming practices and working with communities to bounce back after a crisis and adapt food production to the changing climate.



**SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY** (which means having to skip meals, reducing food intake, or going a day or more without food) in Canada = more than 2 million vs. global 787 million (2023)

## AVERAGE FARM SIZE

in Canada vs. the global south  
809 acres (2021) vs.  
less than 5 acres



**OVERSEAS**, emergency food is distributed directly to people who need it. Other times vouchers or cash are given to people in need so that they can get food from the local market.



## Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- Amos 8:4-8, 11-12
- Matthew 6:19-24
- Matthew 19:16-22
- Proverbs 3:3-10



## Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. To whom are we connected through food? Who are all the hands (both near and far) that touch our food before it arrives to our plate?
2. Do you think our food choices have an impact on others here in Canada or around the world? Why or why not?
3. What are the differences and similarities between foodbanks and soup kitchens in Canada, vs. humanitarian food assistance internationally? How do we as society look at people in need? Is there a difference in how we look at people locally compared to globally?
4. Sometimes people who have many or more than enough resources say that they are blessed. Does that mean that others are not blessed? Do you think that those with enough are more blessed by God than others?
5. How do you think God wants us to respond to those who have less access to resources?
2. Do the Exploring Types of Food Assistance activity together, to learn about different types of emergency food assistance that are distributed, such as food baskets, vouchers, and therapeutic foods.
3. As a group organize a learning visit, and/or volunteer in a local foodbank, soup kitchen or meal program. Learn about the daily realities of the people they serve, and who is supporting their work.
4. Host an international speaker at your church to hear first-hand about the work being done in their country to address food insecurity and build climate resilience (in partnership with Alongside Hope or CLWR). Contact [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca) to find out when a speaker is coming to your region.
5. Play the R-E-S-P-E-C-T game and learn about the relationships between different actors (government, small-scale farmers, citizen groups) in the Global South, and the roles they play in helping people be free from hunger.



## Learning Activities for this Theme:

1. Host a Ration meal for your congregation to eat a simple meal together, reflect on the mealtime reality of millions of hungry people in crisis around the world and bring those in need of emergency food into your prayer focus.
6. Migratory agricultural workers play an important role in Canada's domestic food system. Watch the YouTube video "Heartbeat - A Celebration of International Farm Workers". Organize a visit to a farm in your region that employs temporary farm workers to learn about the jobs they do, and challenges they face.



**Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 3:**

- Voices 1:** Sustainer God, move our eyes beyond the media and lift our faith above statistics.
- Voices 2:** Help us to see through this week’s fashionable cause and remember the places where the cameras are no more, or have never been.
- Voices 1:** Open our ears and eyes, our hearts and lives, that we might see, listen and so be stirred to seek justice, inspired by the thread of connection that binds us all to each other, and to You.
- Voices 2:** Deliver us from our fear of what is different, and our indifference to people and places we do not know.
- ALL:** Inspire us to find new ways to answer the call to end hunger—until all our neighbours flourish, no matter how near or far. May it be so. Amen.

*~ adapted from a prayer posted on The Sanctuary Centre website*

**NOTES**

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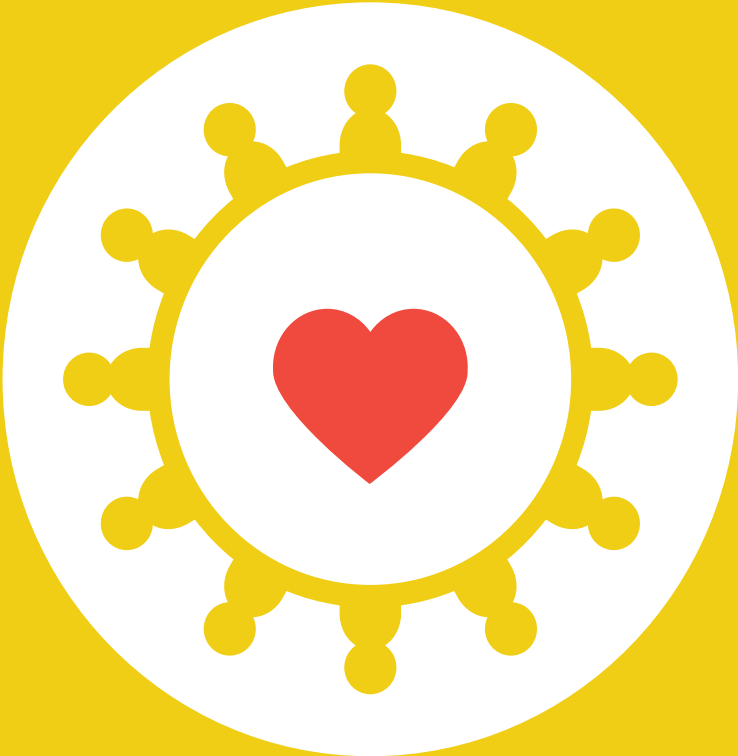
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**W**hen we express thanks, whether through prayer or action, we deepen our relationship with God and with others. Welcoming others, and showing hospitality is an essential way to live out gratitude that creates a ripple effect of kindness in the wider community.

Food acts as a means of fellowship, where relationships are nurtured, stories are shared, and the love of God is reflected in community. By extending our tables, opening our homes and hearts to others to break bread together; we create hopeful spaces where God’s love is experienced in tangible ways. Through hospitality, people are included, valued, and invited into belonging, transcending cultural or social barriers.



# GRATITUDE HOSPITALITY AND INCLUSION

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

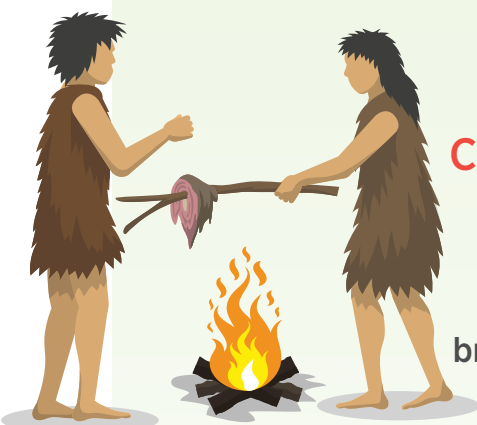
## INDIGENOUS CULTURES

in Canada, including the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations peoples, have a long tradition of hospitality.

The average Canadian eats **FAST FOOD** once per week and only spends a total of 84 minutes cooking and eating each day.



Scientists have studied how **COOKING FOOD WITH FIRE** played an important role in the evolution of our species, shaping not only our pre-human ancestor's brains, but their need for community.



Canada officially adopted

## MULTICULTURALISM

as a national policy in 1971, and we are known around the world for our welcoming stance on refugees, celebration of diversity and promoting inclusion.



### Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- Hebrews 13:1-3
- Mark 2 :15-17
- 1 Peter 4:8-11
- Luke 10:25-37



### Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. How do you know if you are welcome somewhere/in a specific context?
2. What traditions/rules/customs do you have at home at the table or when you eat together?
3. What makes sharing a meal with others special/meaningful to you?
4. How often are you eating alone vs. with other people in an average week? When you eat where are you (e.g. at a table, in the car, walking), who are you with (alone or with others), and what are you eating (fast food, home-cooked meals, pre-prepared snacks)? What do you notice about these habits, and what would you like to change?
5. How does the way you organize church meals together (e.g. buffet-line, family style, or table service) build community around food (or not)?
3. Conduct a welcome assessment of who is in/ outside of the church congregation, in relation to who are the people who live in the community around the church. Who is missing? Why? What could make them feel welcomed/served? Brainstorm ways to make your church more welcoming to the diversity of people in the neighbourhood around it.
4. Host a community potluck and invite everyone to bring their favorite recipe (if they can). If you have the ability to cook a few extra dishes, go wide with invitations, put up posters! – Include time for informal discussion where people can share the origin of the recipe they brought, how and when it is used.
5. Go on a group outing to a local farmers' market. Chat with vendors about their work, its rewards and challenges. Have each group member find and purchase a local food product and build a local food display for your church congregation.



### Learning Activities for this Theme:

1. Invite a chef or baker from a local restaurant to come and cook together with your group and talk about what food means to them.
2. Learn new table graces from the Giving Thanks Booklet – share your favourite table grace from home, school or camp with the group.



**Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 4:**

**Voices 1:** God of Grace and Mercy, we are a nation of all-you-can-eat buffets and fast foods, much of it grown and brought to us by unseen hands.

**Voices 2:** We know that we live in a world of plenty, with food sufficient for all. Remind us of the morning manna in the desert, of simply gathering what is needed each day, and gratefully trusting in your provision for the next.

**Voices 1:** Give us hearts of compassion, and a hunger for all to have abundant life through your Creation.

**ALL:** Help us to realize that a true feast is not defined by the quantity of food, but by the certainty that everyone – no exceptions – has a welcome place at the table. May it be so. Amen.

*~ adapted from a prayer by Deborah Harris, in Feast Together.  
Posted on the Seeds Publishers website*

**NOTES**

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**T**he divide between urban and rural areas can often be marked by unequal access to resources, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Urban areas rely on rural areas for food production and yet often, misconceptions arise between urban and rural Canadians, with each side viewing the other as disconnected from their own reality.

The Church can serve as a unifying force, promoting dialogue and collaboration between rural and urban congregations, and working to complement each other, build connections and foster mutual support and collaboration.



# BRIDGING THE URBAN/ RURAL DIVIDE



# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**KEY TERM(S):** Urban-rural divide refers to the social, economic, and political disparities between urban and rural areas.

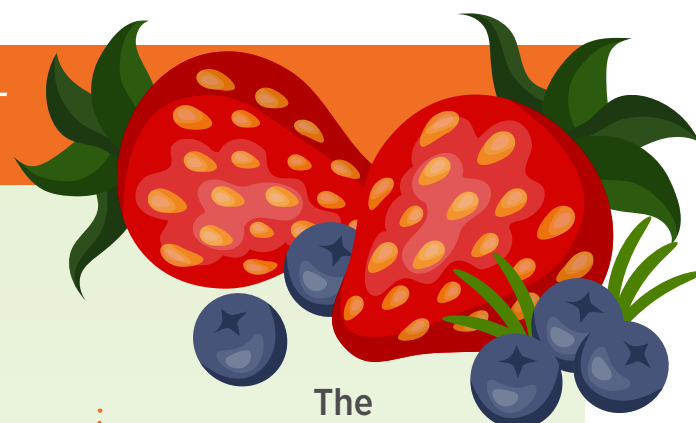


## YOUNG PEOPLE

in rural areas often move to cities for better education and job prospects, contributing to a “brain drain” in rural communities. This migration can lead to aging populations in rural areas and challenges in maintaining local economies and community life.

**STATISTICS CANADA** uses ‘rural’ to define any area of Canada that is outside of settlements with 1,000 or more inhabitants in population.

**Rural 1,000+**



The economic imbalance disproportionately affects Indigenous peoples, as more than

# 60%

live in rural or remote communities, many that are hard to get to, and face extremely high food costs.



# 81%

of the population in Canada lives in urban areas (cities and towns)

\*2021 census



## Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- 2 Corinthians 9:6-11
- John 6:30-35
- Luke 12:22-34
- Micah 6:8



## Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. What are the similarities between farmers in Canada and farmers in the Global South?
2. How do you think the differences between urban and rural areas in Canada shape people’s daily lives, opportunities, and experiences? What are some positive and negative aspects of both environments?
3. How do urban and rural communities differ in terms of cultural identity, traditions, and values? How can we celebrate these differences while promoting understanding and connection between the two?
4. What role can youth play in bridging the urban-rural divide in Canada? How can young people from both urban and rural areas collaborate to create more inclusive, connected communities?
2. Plan an exchange visit for your group to get to know, and fellowship with a sister youth/young adult group in an urban or rural community. Plan collaborative activities that help you discover the different day-to-day realities and experiences.
3. Do the Challenging Conditions activity to explore what life is like for small-scale farmers in the Global South, by introducing participants to a series of characters from different countries and cultures, and the various aspects of their life.
4. Take a field trip to visit one of the many Growing Projects (groups of farmers and farm supporters who collaborate to plant, tend and harvest a crop, sell it on the Canadian market, and then donate the proceeds), to learn about how they are supporting the work to end world hunger, and how your congregation could get involved. Contact [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca) to set up a visit.



## Learning Activities for this Theme:



1. Ask group members to conduct research at home with their families, looking at up to 3 generations past to find out where their parents, grand-parents, great-grand parents, etc. lived - rural, sub-urban, urban) What kind of lifestyle did they have? What kind of relationship did they have to the land? Have them make a poster or drawing that represents their learnings. As a group, reflect on what they learned, and how much has changed over time, and how this informs their current understanding of who they are/their own identity.
5. Mapping commonalities exercise- Is the urban-rural divide a real thing? What is different about each life in each context? (e.g. access to essential services, housing, geography, population, transportation, employment and cost of living, concerns/priorities, etc.)
6. What divides urban and rural Canadians? What unites them? Do you think there are misconceptions or stereotypes about urban and rural communities in Canada? How can we challenge these stereotypes and promote more accurate, respectful portrayals of both lifestyles?

# Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 5:

**Voices 1:** God of seed and harvest, you call us to stand in the gaps and build bridges of compassion. Embolden us now with the courage and creativity needed to cultivate change.

**Voices 2:** You have called us look to a different kind of harvest – a fruitfulness of lives in service to you and others, a table set where all are welcome and have a place.

**Voices 1:** Feed us, tend us, prune us, HARVEST us- that our lives might bring glory to You.

**Voices 2:** Set upon each one of our hearts, a seed of hope, and the desire to dream of bridge-building together, a future where all are fed.

**ALL:** As a sign of Your Kingdom banquet to come, as an act of faith, an act of justice, as an act of worship, sow the seeds of love with our actions. May it be so. Amen.

*~ adapted from Copyright © John Birch, on his website, Faith and Worship  
written by Roddy Hamilton, and posted on Listening to the Stone*

## NOTES

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Jesus calls us to love our neighbours and to demonstrate compassion to those who are disadvantaged. Our Christian faith also calls us to advocate on behalf of those who are in need, and whose voices are not heard. Isaiah 1:17 says to “seek justice, correct oppression; defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

Many vulnerable people in the world are young. However, they might not be able to speak out about a situation due to fear of persecution, lack of resources or lack of education. Or, if they do express themselves, those in positions of power or leadership may not listen.

Young Canadians, on the other hand, live in a society where opinions can be freely and openly expressed. Most also have access to resources and education to be able to communicate effectively with decision makers.

Young Canadians can therefore support other young people around the world by using their voices and education to speak out on issues which are unjust. This is particularly important because Canada is influential globally—decisions made by our government have an impact on the lives of people around the world.



# SPEAKING UP AND OUT ADVOCATE

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



gives less aid on average  
than other wealthy countries.

## ODA

is the envelope of money that Canada sets aside to provide help in other countries for recovery after disaster strikes, to reduce hunger and poverty, and build stronger societies.



## INTERNATIONAL AID

also known as Official Development Assistance (ODA) makes a real impact for people living in poverty around the world.

Canada has  
committed to increase  
aid every year to

# 2030



## AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

increases economic growth,  
improves nutrition, and helps  
communities adapt to a  
changing climate.



## Invitational Bible Study Readings for this Theme:

- Psalm 82:3
- Proverbs 29:7
- Isaiah 56:1-2
- 2 Thessalonians 2:13



## Group Reflection Questions for this Theme:

1. What are examples from scripture in which Christians are called to advocate for justice?
2. Can you think of examples throughout history of Christian individuals or groups who have advocated for and defended the dignity of others, especially those who live in poverty and have limited power?
3. Why should youth communicate with decision makers? Why should they listen to the voices of young people?
4. Do you think we need to wait until all of Canada's problems are solved before we help those facing hunger, poverty and inequality in other parts of our world. Why or why not?
3. Collect as many signed postcards as you can from family, friends, school and community groups and at church. Don't forget to keep a running total of how many completed postcards your group has collected and put in the mail! If you run out and want to order more visit the [www.claygathering.ca/nyp](http://www.claygathering.ca/nyp)
4. Gather paper, pens and envelopes and support the youth to write messages to members of Parliament expressing that they care about global poverty and hunger, and that they want the government to help people in other countries who don't have enough to eat. This can be a simple note or more detailed letter.

mitigation/adaptation, maternal & newborn health, welcoming refugees, etc.



## Learning Activities for this Theme:



1. Invite a speaker from Canadian Lutheran World Relief, or Alongside Hope to share with your group about how international assistance supports the work of their many partners around the world, and how it's making a difference.
2. Watch the [ODA video](#), then make ornaments that represent the gifts the aid gives to the communities who receive it. Decorate a tree branch (or Christmas tree) with the ornaments! Some ideas include: income/livelihoods, education, water, sanitation, medicine/health care, education, gender equality, emergency food, agriculture, conflict prevention, climate

Letters should be addressed to the Prime Minister or to a local member of Parliament in Ottawa (not a provincial MLA or MPP), and they require no postage when mailed to the House of commons.

### Letter to the Prime Minister:

The Right Honourable Mark Carney,  
Prime Minister of Canada  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

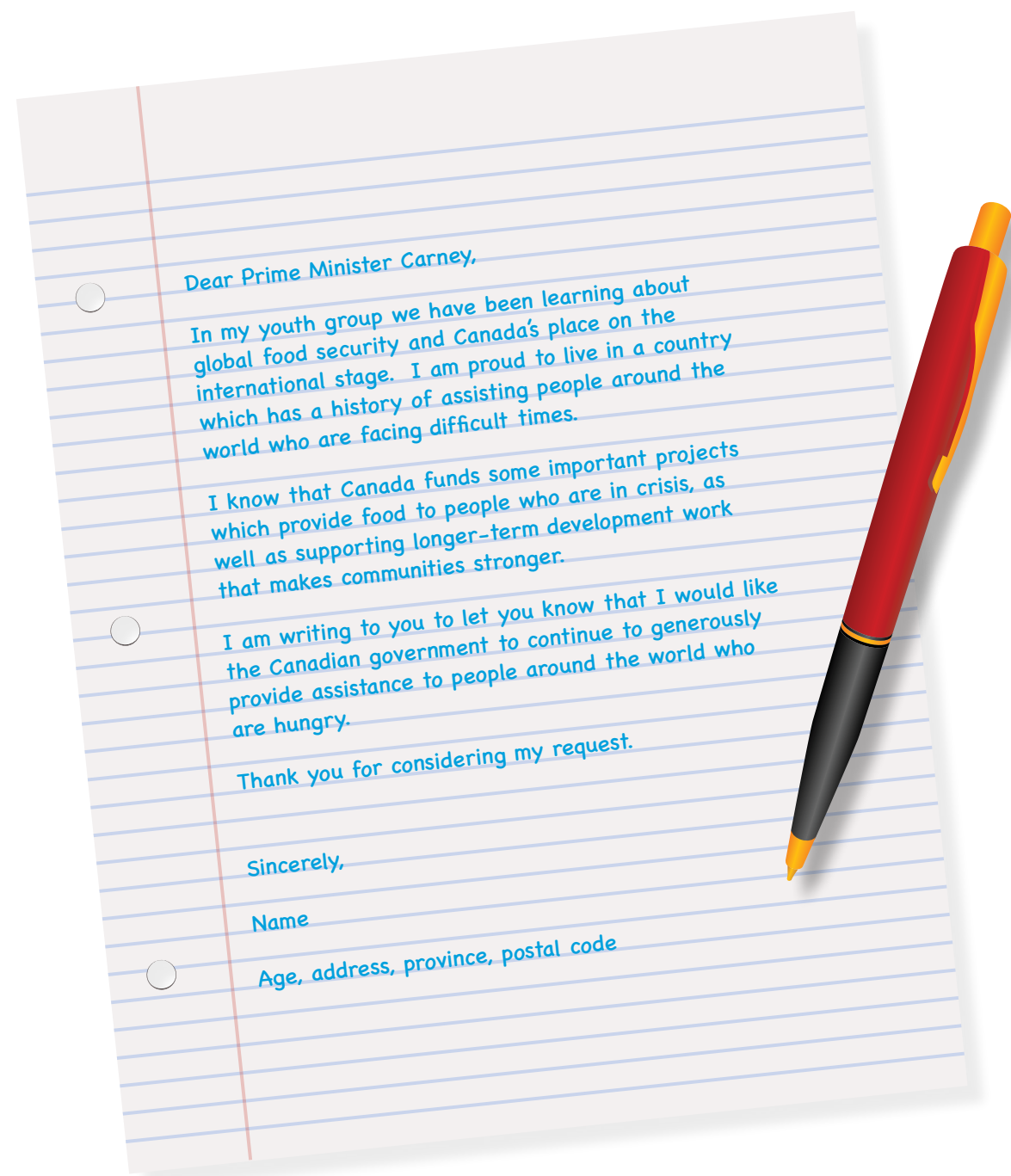
### Letter to your Member of Parliament:

Name of MP  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6



Find out who your MP is and how to contact them at [ourcommons.ca](http://ourcommons.ca).





Dear Prime Minister Carney,

In my youth group we have been learning about global food security and Canada's place on the international stage. I am proud to live in a country which has a history of assisting people around the world who are facing difficult times.

I know that Canada funds some important projects which provide food to people who are in crisis, as well as supporting longer-term development work that makes communities stronger.

I am writing to you to let you know that I would like the Canadian government to continue to generously provide assistance to people around the world who are hungry.

Thank you for considering my request.

Sincerely,

Name

Age, address, province, postal code

1. Explore how social media can be used to share ideas with elected officials. Find out which platforms the Prime Minister, your MP or other cabinet ministers use. Research a bit about their views on ODA, and Canada's role in making the world a better place for everyone. Draft and share messages about global hunger on various social media platforms.
2. Have the members of the group role play a meeting with their member of Parliament to discuss their concern for ending global poverty

and hunger. Afterwards you may even wish to invite your member of Parliament to meet with your group to discuss the issue. Why not reach out to your MP at their local constituency office and invite them to join your group and hear about what you have been learning and doing? MPs usually appreciate the opportunity to be involved in events in their community. Consider a way for them to participate, such as inviting them to provide short remarks. For support in connecting with your MP reach out to us at [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca)

## Closing Prayer for All Sessions in Theme 6:

- Voices 1:** God of love, peace, and justice we offer our prayers for a world where hunger and injustice persist. We are called to amplify your vision for a human family where everyone has enough -
- Voices 2:** **Enough food, water, and resources for a healthy community; not just for today, but for a sustainable future.**
- Voices 1:** We pray for those we have elected to govern us, and for political leaders everywhere, that they will do their jobs with courage, and be strong voices for peace, food for all, and care for all of Your Creation.
- Voices 2:** **We pray also for ourselves, help us to grow in understanding of how we are all connected, of our role in sparking change and reflecting compassion.**
- All:** Show us the ways we can be instruments of grace, to courageously listen, learn and act in Your name - sharing generously the love you have so freely given to us. May it be so, Amen.



**AND IT WAS SO**  
NATIONAL YOUTH PROJECT

And it was so is the National Youth Project of the Anglican Church of Canada and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

[www.claygathering.ca/nyp](http://www.claygathering.ca/nyp)

## Did you use this resource?

We hope that you have found this guide useful and informative! We would love to know what you thought of it - email your feedback to [foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca](mailto:foodjustice@foodgrainsbank.ca). Thank you for letting the Foodgrains Bank take your group on a journey of reflection and learning. We hope that you stay connected with us.



Anglican Church of Canada



Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in Canada