



# Bread for the World Sunday

2007 REFLECTION RESOURCE

**Bread for the World Sunday is officially October 21st but can also be celebrated any Sunday between World Food Day (October 16) and Thanksgiving (November 22).**

Like the widow in Jesus' parable, God's people are called to be persistent in the pursuit of justice for hungry people. This year, Bread for the World Sunday reminds us to keep on knocking on the doors of Congress and to keep on trusting the God who calls us and empowers us for this work. Bread for the World Sunday is a time to join other communities of faith in setting aside at least one Sunday of the year to highlight the need for our prayers, our voices, and our efforts to eliminate hunger and poverty.

## Ideas for Celebrating Bread for the World Sunday



### Pray and reflect.

- Design a worship service focused on the theme of hunger and our call as Christians to respond. You may wish to use the worship resources on page 3 as well as other materials on Bread for the World's website.
- In preparation for Bread for the World Sunday, ask members of your congregation to submit their favorite table blessings or to write new ones. Ask members to remember those who are hungry and go without food while we are blessed with so much. In the spirit of giving thanks for food, intersperse these blessings throughout your Sunday service, or ask members to read their blessings at a given point during the service. If celebrating Communion, have children gather around the elements and pray together a common table prayer, such as "Come, Lord Jesus." These prayers will reflect the theme of Jesus' parable from Luke 18 to "pray always and not to lose heart." Collect these table blessings and distribute to members of your congregation for use at home.

### Educate your church community about hunger.

- Bread for the World has many resources that you can use in your church services, Sunday School classes, coffee hours, or other settings. Visit our website for more ideas and teaching tools.
- Make Bread for the World Sunday a time to begin a JustFaith group in your church. JustFaith, a partner with Bread for the World, provides a lively and challenging opportunity to be formed by the Biblical call to compassion and by the voices of poor and hungry people. Visit [www.justfaith.org](http://www.justfaith.org) or call 1-800-822-7323 to learn more.

### Integrate advocacy into your hunger ministry.

- As part of your Bread for the World Sunday celebration, set aside a few minutes *during* the service to write letters to your senators and representatives in Congress. Provide paper and pens for members of the congregation to

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# Bread for Those Who Would Hear of the Reigning of God

*A reflection on Luke 18: 1-8, the Gospel appointed by the Revised Common Lectionary for Sunday, October 21, 2007*

By the Rev. Ray Kemp

It's been said that Luke had a way with women. More than any of the Gospels, the author of Luke and the Acts includes women in parables and narratives. So the persistence of the widow in securing justice for herself is hardly a surprise. The surprise is that the parable is not as announced—about praying always and not losing heart—but about always seeking justice in the way that God would understand what is right.

Read Luke 18, verses 1 to 8 again. The unjust judge cannot be God as many a homilist has inferred. Take away the opening line, and the parable is about a persistent widow who will not quit seeking justice for herself and her own. Parables are meant to be ambivalent. I count myself with those who see the relentless widow as the image for a relentless passionate God who secures justice for the oppressed and relief for the stricken. Imagine God as the widow banging on the door of the one who cares not for God, nor for the opinion of others. He only cares about being bothered, and how to shut up the complaining God in the person of the widow.



Earlier in Luke, in the ninth chapter, at verse ten, there is a story every pastor who has started a new kind of outreach for the reigning of God has to love. It's a story of the apostles' first mission on their own, preaching the Gospel and healing the sick.

The disciples return to Jesus, excited, because word of their work and that of Jesus had spread around and, dum de dum, gotten even to Herod. The plot is beginning to thicken, and, by the end of the chapter, Jesus knows he has to head for Jerusalem and all that that will mean. Jesus tries to take the disciples away to debrief them, but the crowds follow.

By the end of the day, everyone needs nourishment. The apostles use a form of dismissal, depending on your translation of verse twelve, and it comes down to "Send them away so they can find food for themselves."

Here's the key, and it's in verse thirteen: "Give them something to eat yourselves." The disciples come back with attitude. "We have only five loaves and two fish," and the line "unless you want us to go buy provisions for this crowd." Impossible!

Immediately Jesus shows them the resources are with them to feed the crowd. He has the disciples get everyone seated. This isn't really that stunning of a miracle. Jesus doesn't multiply fish and bread in heaping stacks. Rather, he simply starts sharing, passing what is there around, and there is more than enough for everyone. Twelve large baskets are left over, a number that corresponds to the Twelve Apostles. Get it?

We have the resources to make sure all God's people have enough to eat, and God intends for them to have it.

The aggrieved widow did not want charity. She wanted what was hers by

right. She knew that God stands with those who rely on God's vindication. From the earliest days of the covenant, widows, orphans, and strangers have laid claim to God's favor. Theirs is an advocacy that is blessed in both the Hebrew and the Christian scripture.

The world needs our advocacy today. But advocacy without love and the developing of mutual relationships misses the point of nurturing the dignity of all God's children. And charity without getting to know the conditions that breed hunger is simply not enough. Surely believers need to know more.

Bread for the World has become the best vehicle for advocacy that helps all of us know more about the causes of hunger around the world. Philanthropists, politicians, voters, and church members all need a constant reminder of what Mother Theresa called the "face of Christ." It could be the mother with two children and a steady job, the recently disabled, or the veteran returning from a foreign war. It could be a widow defrauded by an unscrupulous judge. The hungry are closer to us than we know.

Bread for the World works Jesus' words for his friends to the limit. There is enough food for everyone on the planet. Make sure it gets to those who have the most need.

*The Rev. Raymond B. Kemp is a Roman Catholic priest of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. He works at the Jesuit Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University. For the past*

*15 years, Ray has directed Preaching the Just Word, an attempt to get preachers to preach Bread for the World's message.*



# Resources for Worship

These resources were prepared by Emily Kuhn,  
an ELCA seminarian and Bread for the World intern

Alternative prayers and liturgy pieces can be found at [www.bread.org/sunday](http://www.bread.org/sunday)  
to help design a worship service that best suits your congregation.

## CALL TO WORSHIP:

**LEADER:** God has created us in God's image, calling us good.

**PEOPLE:** *And so we give thanks.*

**LEADER:** While remaining fully divine, God became fully human and knows what it means to hunger.

**PEOPLE:** *And so we raise our voices.*

**LEADER:** God has gathered us on this day to advocate for a world without hunger.

**PEOPLE:** *And so we cry for justice.*

**LEADER:** We gather in the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**PEOPLE:** *Amen.*

## PRAYER OF CONFESSION:

Gracious God, we confess that we have allowed there to be hungry people in this world, in this country, and in this community. We confess that we live comfortably within the systems that keep them hungry. We confess that our cries for justice have not been persistent enough and that our hope for change has not been consistent enough. Forgive us, O God. Hear our prayers and renew in us the passion and capacity to join our voices in the cries for justice on behalf of all those who hunger. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

## RESPONSIVE PRAYER/KYRIE:

**LEADER:** In peace, let us pray to the Lord,

**PEOPLE:** *Lord, have mercy.*

**LEADER:** Let us pray for those who are hungry.

**PEOPLE:** *Lord, have mercy.*

**LEADER:** Let us pray for those who are full.

**PEOPLE:** *Lord, have mercy.*

**LEADER:** Let us pray for those whose voices are strong.

**PEOPLE:** *Lord, have mercy.*

**LEADER:** Let us pray for those whose voices have been silenced.

**PEOPLE:** *Lord, have mercy.*

**LEADER:** Let us pray for all those who gather on this day, in this place and across the globe, hungry and full, speaking and silent.

**ALL:** *That, together, we may raise our voices against hunger and injustice. Amen.*



## CLOSING PRAYER:

Gracious God, you are the source of all of our gifts: the sun and rains that nourish the earth, the food and drink that nourish our body, and the passion and interests that nourish our minds. We have what we need to feed the hungry. By your hand, O God, lead us from this place as we, like the woman who cried for justice, lift our own voices on behalf of those who hunger until the day when justice comes. Hold this precious world in your hand, silencing the hunger pangs in every nation. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

## BENEDICTION:

May God, the source of all we eat,  
Christ, our bread of life,  
and the Spirit who gathers the  
grains of wheat into one  
fill you and all who hunger with  
good things,  
strengthen your voice for justice as  
you leave this place,  
and bless you now and forever.  
Amen.

## HYMNS:

Suggested hymns that will incorporate themes of hunger and justice into your worship services:

- \* We Are Called
- \* Canticle of the Turning
- \* Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service

Woodcuts by  
Helen Siegl



# *We Should Never Give Up*

*A reflection for children and for all who wish to learn*

By Ann Davis

Once there was a little boy who during the summer went with his father to the park every day to play on the monkey bars and swings. He would play and play and play. When he began to get hungry, he would join his father on the park bench to eat their picnic lunch of sandwiches, apples, carrots, and chips. Then the boy would return to swinging and playing until it was time to go home.

One day he realized that another child playing in the park never seemed to stop for lunch. He asked her why she didn't bring a picnic lunch with her. She replied that she lived nearby and could just go home, but there usually wasn't anything there to eat.

The next day the boy brought an extra sandwich for her and invited her to have lunch with him. The girl said no, that she wasn't very hungry, even though she was looking at the sandwich as if she was hungry. Every day after that the little boy would bring an extra sandwich and invite the girl to join him. Every day the girl would say that she wasn't hungry.

Finally one day when the little boy invited the girl, she said yes, and hungrily ate the sandwich, some carrots, and several of the chocolate chip cookies. And for the rest of the summer the little boy and the little girl ate the lunch that the boy packed each day.

- Do you think the boy was kind to offer to share his lunch with the girl?
- Do you think he was brave to keep inviting her when she kept saying no?
- Would you have kept inviting her or would you have just given up and decided to stop bothering her?
- Have you ever shared a lunch with someone who didn't have one?

In Luke 18 verses 1 to 8 Jesus tells his friends a wonderful story to show them that they should never give up. The story is about a woman who never gave up. She kept going to tell the judge in town that she was not being treated right. The judge didn't care about her. But he got really tired of the woman bothering him, so he decided to help her so she would leave him alone. Because she refused to give up, she was able to make things right for herself. Read the whole story from Luke in your Bible.

- Do you think the woman was brave to keep going back to the judge?
- Do you think she sometimes felt it would be a waste of time?
- Would you have been able to keep going back to a judge who obviously didn't care about you or your problem?

God asks us to love God and love our neighbor. We show we love God

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*(from other side)*

with acts of worship and devotion. We show we love our neighbor with acts of kindness and justice. An act of kindness is sharing a lunch with someone who is hungry, much like the boy in our story today. An act of justice tries to help make food available on a regular basis for hungry people, or to help change some of the reasons that there are hungry people.

- What more could the boy have done for the girl besides sharing his lunch every day?
- Do you know anyone who might be hungry because there is not enough food at home?
- Have you heard of any group or organization that helps provide food on a regular basis for hungry people?
- What can you do to be more involved with helping hungry people?

**For further reading**—two books that help children learn about acts of kindness and acts of justice:

- *Benjamin Brody's Backyard Bag* by Phyllis Vos Wezeman and Colleen Wiessner (FaithQuest)

- *Jared and the Ordinary, Handy-dandy, Excellent, Extraordinary, Plain Brown String* by Dana Webb (Chariot Victor Publishing)

**For further activities:**

- Challenge the children to watch out for someone who doesn't have a lunch.
- Have the children make sandwiches for a nearby shelter or food pantry.
- Encourage the children to save and donate funds towards an organization that feeds the hungry. They could sell sandwiches before and after church as a fundraiser.

**For additional ideas of how to include children into Bread for the World Sunday, visit our website, [www.bread.org/sunday](http://www.bread.org/sunday).**

*Ann Davis is Director of Children's Ministries and Discipleship for the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. In this role, she develops resources that nurture children's faith development and that encourage local churches in outreach ministries with children and poor people.*



## *Who is Bread for the World?*

**B**read for the World is a Christian citizens' movement that envisions a world without hunger. It has 58,000 members including 2,500 churches. This nonpartisan organization is supported by 45 denominations representing a diversity of theological perspectives.

For more than 30 years, Bread for the World has urged our nation's decision-makers to address root causes of hunger at home and abroad. Bread for the World members act out of a conviction that citizenship is one of our greatest resources and should be offered up to God in service of hungry and poor people.

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hand-write their letters. Sample letters can be found at [www.bread.org/take-action](http://www.bread.org/take-action). Through these letters, we lift our voices on behalf of justice, much like the widow in Jesus' parable in Luke 18. Gather these letters with the offering for the day. Send them to members of Congress the following day or sometime later in the week.

- Set up a letter writing time following the worship service—perhaps during your fellowship or coffee hour. Have paper, pens, and envelopes ready on tables so interested individuals can write letters before heading home.
- Offer a prayer over the letters, asking that the words and intentions expressed by your church members might influence and encourage members of Congress to work on behalf of hungry and poor people.

### **Make a commitment to Bread for the World.**

- Together, we can end hunger in God's world. Through your church's financial support and by encouraging individuals to join Bread for the World, your congregation becomes a partner in our grassroots advocacy efforts.
- You may wish to use Bread for the World pew or offering envelopes to collect individual membership forms from the back of the bulletin inserts or to gather a special offering.
- If your church hasn't already done so, become a Bread for the World Covenant Church. In this way, your community makes a commitment to integrate hunger concerns into the life of your congregation. Bread for the World will provide tools that will equip your church to take action to end hunger.



**Bread for the World**

*Seeking Justice. Ending Hunger.*

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### **Most of all . . . be creative.**

Think of new and creative ways to get the message out, especially if this is not your church's first celebration of Bread for the World Sunday. There are many ways to include members of your church in hunger-related activities like soup suppers, hunger meals, fasts, or baking and selling bread. Some ideas . . .



- Hold a canned food drive to highlight the issues of hunger and poverty. Have individuals place their gifts of canned food and money on or by the communion table or altar. If your church is also participating in letter writing, have members present these letters as well. These gifts represent a collection for the poor and symbolize the connectedness of compassion and justice.
- Incorporate practices from the early Church into your celebration of Bread for the World Sunday. When the first Christians gathered together, they often shared a common meal consisting not only of bread and wine, but also of cheese and olives, and other fruits such as grapes, pears, and apples. These foods represented the gifts of their harvests. Eventually, the Christian community began to distribute the food and money they had collected to those members of the community who were absent as well as to poor and hungry people.

In this spirit of the early church, you may wish to complement Holy Communion by serving a full meal or hosting a "love feast." In addition to bread and wine, offer cheese, apples, olives, and other fruits and grains of the harvest. Use real loaves of bread instead of unleavened bread or wafers. Then, set aside a portion of what you serve to distribute among those who are hungry in your community.