

How to talk to your family about the hunger situation

God has so abundantly provided for all we could ever need. Yet, so many are left struggling—either due to lack of available, sustainable food, or due to over-availability and misuse.

During this prayer weekend, reflect on your connection with those in your family or circle of support and in your community. It can be difficult to talk to your family and friends about hunger, especially when they themselves may be struggling. Chances are that a person in your congregation or a child in your son or daughter's class at school may be going to bed hungry every night. It's an alarmingly common, but hidden, problem.

We hope that by joining together with one another and with God this weekend, it will help nurture our connections and allow us to deepen our understanding of what our neighbours are going through.

SOME WAYS TO GET YOUR CHILDREN THINKING ABOUT HUNGER:

- Read or share a story about someone who is hungry and talk about their experiences. You can use some of our social media resources at wvi.org/weekendofprayer, read a book, or find a documentary online.
- Share some Bible verses and think about what God wants us to do for people who are hungry. Some bible verses to look at include Matthew 25:35-40, Isaiah 58:7-10, Luke 3:11, Proverbs 22:9 and 25:21, James 2:15-17.
- Talk to them about the difference between hunger (feeling uncomfortable because you haven't eaten enough) and food security (not having regular "access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food").
- Ask them what they think might be some of the causes, and effects of hunger. Help children understand how issues like poverty might be connected to hunger. Talk about how people earn different salaries and ask them to think about how you might need to change what you buy at the supermarket depending on your budget, and what consequences that may have.

IF YOU DO ONE THING AS A FAMILY THIS WEEKEND, PLEASE:

Pray and dedicate a meal to people who might be going hungry in your community and abroad. Ask your children to write and lead the prayer based on what you've learned and spoken about together.

OTHER IDEAS TO TAKE FURTHER ACTION WITH YOUR CHILDREN:

- Ask how you could help as a family and talk with your children about what they think they should do as a response. Some ideas might include volunteering with a local food bank or cooking a hot meal at a shelter.
- Go to the grocery store and let your children pick out some items to donate to a local food bank.

- Try to ensure that the food you buy helps combat climate change, buy local produce, and buy goods that guarantee the farmer got a fair price for his or her produce, such as 'fair trade' goods.
- Donate to charities working to solve hunger, both in your own community, and those working globally with organisations like World Food Programme.
- Plant a family garden. Grow your own vegetables and share them with friends and your congregation.
- Visit a local farm or self-pick and get involved. Speak to the farmer about the process of growing food, what work goes into it, and let the children help with the harvest before donating to a local food bank.

WHAT IS DRIVING THE GLOBAL HUNGER CRISIS?

The global hunger crisis is being driven by conflict, climate change, and the economic impacts of COVID-19 that has left people even further behind.

How does conflict drive hunger? Conflict makes food difficult to produce and afford. Many are forced to flee their homes and their land to avoid conflict, so they can no longer grow produce they once depended on. War also destroys land and villages/towns where trading would have once taken place. Competition for food and scarce resources multiplies the threat of civil war as desperation forces people to fight for available food—especially in countries that are already unstable.

How does climate change drive hunger?

Climate change is a threat multiplier for hungry and undernourished people. Countries with high levels of hunger are often also highly vulnerable to climate change and have a low capacity to adapt. Many natural disasters driven by climate change take place in countries where many people are already experiencing hunger. For example, if a hurricane destroys the home and land of a small family in Honduras, it is unlikely that they have insurance and they may not have enough money to rebuild. Climate change affects food production and availability, access, quality, utilization, and stability of food systems.

How has COVID-19 driven hunger? In 2020, the coronavirus pandemic saw people who had been previously able to support themselves put out of work and confronted by rocketing food prices. Hunger spiked among urban populations too as people were left jobless and without safety nets to fall back on. Many higher-income countries responded to unemployment caused by COVID-19 by creating emergency social protection programmes for those not at work. However, many lower-income countries could not do this and those who lost their jobs were left with no money and no means to feed themselves or their families.

Up to 811 million* people were hungry in 2020, up by 161 million from 2019. Hunger increased in all regions of the world.

* The State of Food Insecurity in the World Report provides a range for the number of people hungry, given data collection challenges. For this fact sheet, we've used 811 million which is the upper figure of their range.