



Clothed with Christ: An Introduction to Talking about Gender

Opening

Activity Level: All

Goal: Participants will discover how the idea of putting on the new clothing of Christ (as referenced in Galatians 3:27-28) can challenge assumptions about gender that may limit the full expressions of who we are as God’s people.

MATERIALS

Paper, pens or pencils, markers or crayons or colored pencils, person outlines (see “My Favorite Clothes” handout), “Commitments for Safe Conversation” handout. Both handouts are at the end of the activity.

NOTE FOR PRESENTER

Some groups may work through this activity rather swiftly, within a single session. Other groups may opt to take more time, such as doing the activity over multiple sessions. Either way is appropriate. Welcome the participants to the session on gender and hunger. To prepare everyone’s hearts and minds for the time together, choose one of the prayers or hymns listed below or choose your own.

PRAYERS

Holy Creator, as we gather as one in You, we recognize that we each bring a story and an understanding of who we are. Help us to seek Your presence in the stories of others that we share and in one another. You have called us to justice, and learning about the injustices that create gender inequality and hunger may challenge us, God. We desire to learn your ways and to deconstruct the stereotypes and assumptions that lead to inequity. Help us to enter this time together with open hearts and with the boldness to learn, to change, and to grow so that we can be instruments of your peace.

Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(From the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer)

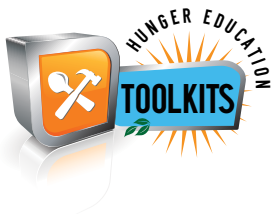
HYMN SUGGESTIONS

“One Bread, One Body” ELW 496, “We Are Called” ELW 720, “Jesu Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” ELW 708

INSTRUCTIONS

As you begin this activity, it will be helpful to establish a safe space for discussion. Conversations about gender can often bring up unexpected and highly personal values, beliefs and experiences. Using the “Commitments for Safe Conversation” as a worksheet (or your own version of something similar) will help you create a space of trust, honesty and affirmation. Ask participants if they have anything to add to the list of commitments and then ask the group as a whole to agree to those commitments as they work through these activities together.





Clothed with Christ: An Introduction to Talking about Gender

Opening

Activity Level: All

Consider displaying the below Galatians text somewhere highly visible, or encourage participants to have their Bibles open to the text throughout the activity. To begin the activity, read the following aloud:

“The author of Galatians writes, in the third chapter, that our faith in Christ frees us from the constraints of laws and expectations that separate us from each other. Instead, we are all made one in Christ. Galatians 3:27-28 says:

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male AND female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” [emphasis added]

In belonging to and with Christ through our faith, we are all “clothed with Christ.”

We all put on clothes every day. We use clothes to express ourselves and to communicate part of who we are to the people around us. We use clothes to show respect, to fit in, to stand out, or to make people want to get to know us.

The clothes that women and girls and men and boys wear are often different. As we talk more about the clothes people wear in our communities and culture, we’ll start thinking about what clothes have to do with gender in a bit. But first, let’s look at how we feel about our own clothes.

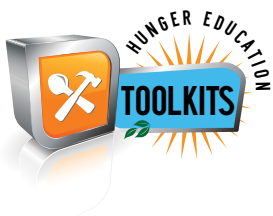
ACTIVITY

Pass out “My Favorite Clothes” handouts to all participants, and ask them to spend the next 5 minutes drawing their favorite clothes. While drawing clothes on the handout, have participants think about why they like wearing those clothes. Ask them to choose a word that expresses why they like that outfit so much. For example, does it make them feel comfortable? Professional? Attractive? Artistic? Smart? Strong? Festive? Have them write that word (or a few) on the handout beside the clothes they’ve drawn. It will be important that they do not write their name on the handout.

After a few minutes, if you have a large group, have everyone post their pictures up around the room. Ask participants to look carefully at the pictures of clothes drawn by the people around them and ask the questions below. If you have a small group, you can invite participants to share 1–2 minutes about their outfits and the words they chose. You can then lead a small discussion in a similar fashion using the questions below.

Ask participants to choose one or two of the pictures to study and discuss.

1. What do these clothes tell you about the person who wears them? What activities do they likely do? What adjectives, besides the one(s) they listed, do you associate with the outfit, or the person who might wear this outfit?
2. Can you guess the gender of the person wearing this outfit? What makes you come to this conclusion?
3. What risks or benefits are derived from wearing gender-specific clothes, such as a dress or a suit? How might we react when someone wears clothes that don’t match the gender we think they are?
4. Now that you’re thinking about how clothes express gender, think about the activities you assumed corresponded with those clothes. What does that tell you about the activities and adjectives we associate with women and girls or men and boys? What activities do we tend to assume are done best or most frequently by women, girls, boys, men or gender-nonconforming people?



Read aloud:

*Gender is complicated. As we've demonstrated in this activity, gender has to do with **identity** (how we think about and understand ourselves as people with or without gender) but also with how we "express" or "perform" that gender when we move and act in the world. Those expressions and performances involve the clothes we wear, the activities we do, the way we carry ourselves, and the way we interact with others.*

At the same time, other people see us as having a certain gender. When people express gender in ways that do not conform to how we expect women or men to act, others around them often become confused, feel uncomfortable, or may even feel the need to force them to act as either strictly feminine or masculine. But what does it mean to be masculine or feminine? In the next activity, we're going to take a look at this question.

ACTIVITY 2

Write "feminine" and "masculine" on a board and ask participants to say all the things they associate with these two words – activities, emotions, professions, etc.

Look for terms associated with domestic life (for femininity) and public life (for masculinity), as well as differences between emotions and the body (femininity) and strength and reason (masculinity). If it makes sense for your group and your time constraints, consider taking some of the drawings and posting them under your "feminine" and "masculine" categories.

Read aloud:

In our culture and society, the gender identities, expressions and performances of women, girls and people who don't act in ways one would expect someone of their gender to act are often deemed less valuable, less able, less legitimate and more expendable by those who perceive them. Those who identify and perform masculinity are often assumed to be more intelligent, more trustworthy, stronger and more important by those

who perceive them. Men who do things that society says aren't "manly" may be seen as weak.

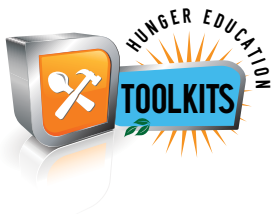
Societies with social systems that are controlled by men and that value qualities associated with manhood or masculinity more highly than qualities associated with femininity are called patriarchies.

Discuss:

Look back at your list of terms that have been associated with masculine and feminine. Discuss the following questions:

1. What words convey power or powerfulness?
2. What words convey a sense of authority?
3. What happens if someone who appears to be a man acts in some of the ways listed under "feminine," or if someone who appears to be a woman acts in ways listed under the category "masculine"? How might they be treated?

When someone looks or acts in ways that don't conform to stereotypes about their perceived gender, they might identify as "gender nonconforming" or "transgender." Some people may dress in clothes that are traditionally associated with a different gender than their birth biology might suggest. Others may seek medical help in transitioning physically to the gender they identify with. The term "transgender" (used throughout this toolkit) encompasses a wide range of behaviors, identities and attitudes, so it is difficult to say how many people in the United States identify as transgender. What is easier to observe is the discrimination, harassment and violence many transgender people face. For example, nearly 1 in 5 transgender people has experienced domestic violence because of their identity. Half have experienced harassment at work. More than 10 percent have been evicted from their housing because of their identity. (Sources: Sylvia Rivera Law Project, FORGE, National Center for Transgender Equality).



Read aloud:

Assumptions about who someone is supposed to be and how they are supposed to be become unconscious and unquestioned. How we see ourselves and how others see us are both influenced by the ways our society understands gender. When we value one kind of identity over another, we tend to give more benefits – more power, more pay, more influence – to people who conform to this identity. So, when we value “masculine” qualities more than “feminine” qualities, we tend to give more benefits to people perceived as masculine. When we expect people to behave as feminine, we may mistreat them if they behave in ways that are perceived as masculine.

This mistreatment goes far beyond the ways we treat each other person-to-person. In some cultures and societies beliefs about gender prevent women and girls from getting an education. Sometimes those values tell communities that women do not deserve to be paid as much for the work that they do or that they should not be able to work at all. These values have a huge impact on women and girls’ access to resources and opportunities to have control over their lives; they have a huge impact on entire communities and on individuals. Sometimes, those values and norms tell men and boys that they must always be strong and in control – they cannot fully express sadness, pain or frustration without using violence.

Reflect for a moment individually about the following questions and then discuss with a partner. After a few minutes, share what you and your partner discussed with the group.

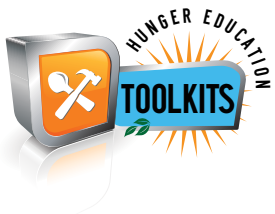
1. What are some other ways you can see how societies centered on men and masculinity limit and oppress women, girls and gender-nonconforming people? How do those values affect women’s ability to support themselves, their families and their communities?
2. What are some ways that societies centered on men and masculinity can limit and oppress men? How do those values affect men?

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

In the United States, white women on average earn only 79 cents for every dollar white men earn for equivalent work. The “pay gap” between men and women is even more complicated when racial disparities intersect with gender disparities. For example, African American women and Latina women earn only 64 cents and 56 cents respectively for every dollar a non-Hispanic white man earns. (White House, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/equal-pay>)

In more than 100 countries, school is not free, and many families choose to invest in their sons rather than their daughters. As a result, only 30 percent of girls worldwide are able to get a secondary education. (DayoftheGirl.org)

Seventy-nine economies worldwide restrict the kinds of jobs women can do. In 15 of these, husbands can legally prevent their wives from working. (unwomen.org)



Clothed with Christ: An Introduction to Talking about Gender

Opening

Activity Level: All

Read aloud:

Values and assumptions about gender contribute to problems of hunger and poverty in the world in countless ways, making some women, girls and transgender individuals especially vulnerable.

These cultural and social values and norms keep us from being the whole people in healthy communities that God intends us to be. Remember our Galatians text:

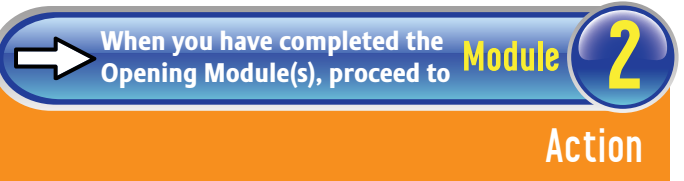
As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male AND female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. [emphasis added]

Discuss:

Thinking about these activities, what strikes you, or stands out to you, about this text? [Note to the facilitator: For especially engaged and interested audiences, consider mentioning that the writer of Galatians uses the word “or” between Jew and Greek and between slave and free, but switches to the word “and” when saying male and female. Why might that be? What new insights can that give us to this conversation? What does gender look like in the reign of God?]

Read aloud:

Each of these pairs – Jew and Greek, slave and free, male and female – represent a relationship that was unequal in Paul’s time. But Paul lifts up “Greeks” or non-Jews as part of the body of Christ, recognizes the dignity of slaves, and praises the leadership of women in the early church. Baptism and the clothing of Christ invite us into a new way of relating to one another as gendered people. Christ tears down the inequalities between men, women and transgender people and offers reconciliation and renewal in human communities. Christ’s clothing is for all of us, regardless of gender identity, performance or perception. God welcomes us into new clothing, new community and new life





Commitments for Safe Conversation

The purpose of honest sharing is to open up discussion and to make space for the Holy Spirit to work through your conversations. To ensure that all those gathered around the table feel safe to speak and to listen, commitments for safe conversation are helpful. When everyone agrees to these commitments, they help build trust among participants and create a space in which honest, fruitful conversation is possible.

Here are some principles we can start with:

We will listen respectfully and carefully to others.

We will keep an open mind and heart.

We will speak honestly about thoughts and feelings.

Each of us speaks for ourselves, rather than as a member of a group. *We do not necessarily know what everyone else in the group is thinking or feeling – even if we’ve known someone for a long time and think we know them well. Use “I-statements” rather than “you-statements” or “we-statements.” Likewise, we should remember that other conversation partners can only speak for themselves and shouldn’t be expected to speak for a whole group.*

A true conversation needs give and take, so each person should have an opportunity to share.

What is said here, stays here. Confidentiality can help demonstrate our trust and concern for each other.

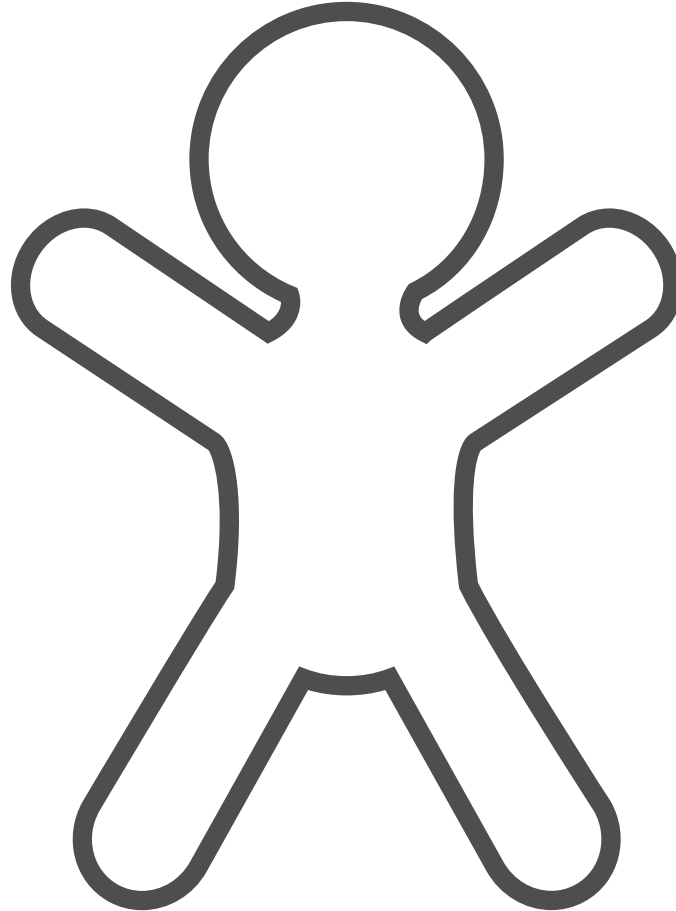
We will treat each other with grace.

The outcome, quality and safety of the conversation is a responsibility for all of us.





My Favorite Clothes







Working Glossary

Here are some terms you may encounter while leading a group through this toolkit. You may want to go over a few of these with the group at first to be sure that everyone has a shared understanding of what the terms mean.

Agency: An individual's capacity to act independently in an environment; this includes their ability to make their own decisions freely. When people are oppressed, their ability to make choices is limited. For instance, a mother can make a decision between staying home with her children full time, working full time, or a combination of both. However, when society does not offer support systems that enable her to make the choice she would like, her agency is restricted.

Biological sex characteristics: The physical and physiological traits that we often associate with either males or females. These traits include genitalia, body hair, facial hair, height, muscle mass, body fat, body shape, breast tissue, and the size of hands and feet, to name a few. These traits often (but not always) shape how people are perceived or identify in terms of their gender. Individuals whose biological characteristics, especially genitalia, are ambiguous at birth are often called intersex individuals.

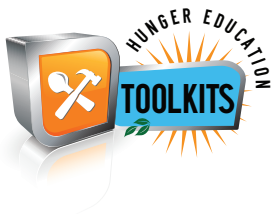
Equality: Equality has to do with sameness, promoting fairness and justice by giving everyone the same thing. However, in order for fairness and justice to flourish, people need to have the ability to make the choices that will help them accomplish their goals. See the "Equality vs. Equity" handout in the "Ruth and Daw San Myint: Agency and Equity" activity.

Equity: Equity has to do with fairness, making sure people get what they need in order to have access to the same opportunities. Equity takes into considerations the social, religious, cultural and legal circumstances that need to be overcome in order to achieve food security. Equity often means ensuring that all people are able to access the same opportunities, even if the results are not exactly the same (as they would be with "equality.") See the "Equality vs. Equity" handout in the "Ruth and Daw San Myint: Agency and Equity" activity.

Gender: Categories into which cultures and societies separate behaviors and characteristics that are usually considered masculine or feminine. The most common gender identities are woman and man, but other identities exist and are becoming more widely used and understood.

Intersectionality: The way that one form of oppression or privilege can be shaped by and can shape other forms of oppression or privilege. For example, the intersection of racism and sexism will both affect the oppression experienced by a woman of color differently than either the racism experienced by a man of color, or the sexism experienced by a white woman. Factors that can intersect with and thus influence the individual experiences of gender-based oppression include: age, ability, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, nationality/citizenship, social class, economics and religion. Human identities are made up of many intersections.





Justice: Right relationship with God and others. Generally, justice refers to an underlying sense of fairness, right treatment and reciprocity. When someone uses the word, that person may have a particular kind of justice in mind. Some of these include: retributive justice, corrective justice, distributive justice, restorative justice, structural justice, fair or equal treatment under the law, ending oppression based on power differences, or biblical righteousness.

Patriarchy: The systems of society that are designed to best serve men and the interests of men with status and power. While all people within a patriarchal system participate in it, the system in which we participate functions with men at the center. This means that sometimes unintentionally, people participate in systems that control and oppress women, girls, transgender individuals, LGBTQ people, and all those who are not normative, heterosexual men.

Sexism: Sexism is anything that promotes the privilege of men and the oppression of women, girls and transgender individuals. This includes promoting or accepting gender roles that are hierarchical, perpetuating stereotypes, and punishing people who don't act or present themselves according to those roles or stereotypes. Sexism happens every day, and it is perpetuated by individuals, communities, institutions and whole cultures. Acting against sexism requires courage because it often means taking a social, or even physical, risk.

Transgender: People whose gender identity, gendered way of acting in the world, and biological characteristics do not completely fit within expected ways of acting as a man or a woman. In this toolkit, transgender is used broadly.



Walking in Her Shoes

Goal: In this activity, participants will follow the struggles and successes of three women and will learn about the connection between gender inequality and hunger, along with how women can be a power that lifts families and communities out of poverty and hunger.

MATERIALS

“Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group), numbered fact cards for stories (distribute among the group face down)

NOTE FOR PRESENTER

In this activity, participants will walk in the shoes of three women living in different parts of the world by hearing their stories and accompanying them as they face important decisions. Depending on your time constraints and size of your group, you can pick one story for the whole group or divide into three small groups that each read one of the stories. In either case, discuss the activity together as a large group at the end.

Group members or the leader may read the story aloud, pausing for cards and questions. When the group reaches a card, the individual holding that card turns it face up, reads it, and places it where the group can see it for the remainder of the activity.

Read aloud:

You are about to learn about the life of a woman vulnerable to hunger because of gender-based discrimination and oppression.

(The next sentence is on a card and can be posted for the group after it is read): Women spend, on average, three hours more per day than men on unpaid work in developing countries and two hours more per day than men in developed countries; when all work – paid and unpaid – is considered, women work longer hours than men.

The women in these stories face obstacles of violence, economic disadvantage and health concerns. Opportunities and resources available helped these women improve their status and lessen the poverty within their families and communities. The stories of the women featured in this activity are developed from the stories of women around the globe assisted through projects supported in part by ELCA World Hunger.

It is important to remember that as we learn these women’s stories and try to “walk in their shoes,” we cannot fully understand their circumstances. Our perspectives may be different from theirs, but placing ourselves in their “shoes” can help us glimpse some of the reasons for their decisions. Most of all, we should remember to have a graceful and empathetic response to situations in which others may find themselves.





JENNA'S STORY

Jenna is 19 years old and lives in the United States. She grew up in a home with a father who struggled with alcoholism and abused her and her mother. Jenna left school at 16 and ran away from home. For the past three years Jenna has been working part-time jobs and living on the streets. Without a high school diploma, it is hard for Jenna to find a job that is full-time and provides benefits.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Jenna has not been able to find a full-time job. Should she start working toward her GED (General Education Development, high school equivalency for those who do not graduate from high school) or seek a full-time job working minimum wage, which would not leave her time to get her GED? What would you do if you were in Jenna's shoes?

After a few minutes of discussion, have someone from the group read the following information on their card (card 1) and then post it for the group to see:

70 percent of out-of-school youth worldwide are girls.
(girleffect.com)

Jenna has weighed her options, and for now, she decides to seek a full-time job. It feels too risky to quit working, but she promises herself she will start working on her GED next year.

Because Jenna struggles to find a steady job to support herself, she stays with friends or strangers when she is able. Often, she spends the night on the streets. One night Jenna meets a stranger who says he will give her food and a place to sleep for the night. Jenna decides to stay with the man until she can find another place to stay. He is very kind to Jenna and takes care of her, and Jenna begins to trust him. After a few weeks of living together the man gives Jenna an ultimatum: Earn money as an exotic dancer or prostitute to pay him back or go back to living on the streets.

Group member reads card 2 and then posts it for the group to see:

Human trafficking occurs when people are forced to do labor against their will in industries like prostitution, exotic dancing or massage, or in factories and on farms. The vast majority of sex-trafficking victims are women and girls.
(polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview)

Group member reads card 3 and then posts it for the group to see:

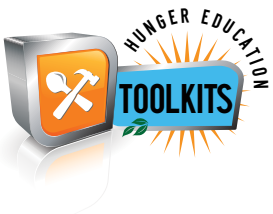
Poverty is one of the main factors that lead women to fall prey to human traffickers. (UNESCO).

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Jenna's trafficker overhears Jenna telling a friend about how hard it has been to stay off drugs during this difficult time. She had worked hard to stay "clean" after using off and on for years. Over the next days and weeks, her trafficker begins leaving drugs out to tempt her. Jenna feels hopeless and depressed and is told that the drugs will help her feel better. Jenna is also afraid of what might happen to her if she tries to refuse. What thoughts does this bring to your mind? How would you feel if you were in Jenna's shoes? What do you think Jenna should do? What are the risks if Jenna refuses (punishment by the trafficker, exhaustion)? What are the risks if Jenna agrees to take the drugs (health and social consequences, such as being arrested, addiction, etc.)?

After brief conversation, a group member reads card 4 and then posts it for the group to see:

Drugs are often used by human traffickers to keep women from running away once they become addicted. Sometimes victims of trafficking are actually trafficked by someone from their own community who has ties to their family. (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, polarisproject.org/human-trafficking/overview)



Jenna is forced into prostitution by her trafficker and is arrested in a sting. It is Jenna's third arrest, so she is charged with a felony and must spend six months in jail and pay a \$2,000 fine. After serving her sentence, Jenna now has to disclose her conviction on job applications, and many employers won't hire her. She has little money for food and some days can barely afford to eat.

A group member reads card 5 and then posts it for the group to see:

Eight months after being released from prison, an average of 55 percent of people will be unemployed. (Urban Institute)

After not eating for three days Jenna decides to go to a homeless shelter that serves meals every night from 5–7. While at the shelter having dinner, Jenna is introduced to a worker from Sankofa House for Women, a project supported in part by ELCA World Hunger.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

A worker from Sankofa House for Women tells Jenna about the services they provide and invites Jenna to make an appointment to come and see her. Why might Jenna feel uneasy about keeping her appointment?

(Leader may want to prompt with – How does Jenna feel about trusting new people? Jenna is used to fending for herself. How might it feel to ask Sankofa staff for help?)

Allow time for the group to discuss and then continue reading below.

Jenna is scared to start again, and her self-confidence is low, but she does make it to her appointment. She is able to stay at Sankofa House for Women, which provides her with healthy meals and a safe place to sleep. Jenna is also able to attend tutoring sessions and begins studying for her GED.

Sankofa House also offers drug-treatment classes. Jenna decides that she should participate in the classes.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Jenna has started taking the drug-treatment classes, but when she goes to visit some of her friends, they offer her drugs and pressure her to get high with them. Can you relate to a time when you have tried to make a positive change and others pressured you to do the wrong thing? What might make it especially difficult for Jenna to resist this pressure?

Jenna tries to say no to her friends. One of them says that ever since she started staying at the shelter and becoming sober she acts like she is better than them. Jenna is tempted to just give in; she misses these people. Instead, she gets up and says she just has to go. On her walk back to Sankofa House, her sadness makes her cry – but at the same time, she really feels proud of herself.

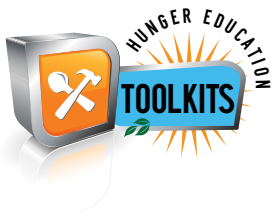
A group member reads card 6 and posts for the group to see:

After the first three years of sobriety, people are more likely to remain sober. That means that for at least three years people often need a lot of extra support. Many treatment programs only last a few months. (National Institute on Drug Abuse)

Three months after Jenna started staying at Sankofa House she was able to pass the GED test. Having a GED helped Jenna to find a job that allows her to rent an apartment and live independently. She is thinking about studying to become a nurse.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

When Jenna is looking for an apartment, does she live closer to her job downtown and pay higher rent or live farther away from work so she can save money to continue her education but commute by bus for 40 minutes each way? What are the pros and cons are for each option? If you were Jenna, what would you do, pay higher rent or have a longer commute? How can access to transportation affect Jenna's ability to earn her livelihood?



A group member reads **card 7** and posts for the group to see:

In recent studies, commuting time has been strongly correlated with escaping poverty. Workers and job seekers with long commutes and without access to public transportation may be at greater risk of remaining poor. (The New York Times)

Jenna's new home and new start have made it possible for her to feel secure. She really values her independence and knows that staying sober is a top priority. She begins to save a little money for continuing her education and, after much hard work, she is safe and food secure!

QUESTION FOR WHOLE GROUP

What impact does Sankofa House have on Jenna's life? Why does ELCA World Hunger invest in programs like this? In what other ways can the ELCA or your congregation better understand the many challenges women like Jenna face? What assets or strengths does Jenna have that help her change her situation?

Card 8:

ELCA World Hunger accompanies women around the world in a variety of ways. Shelters for women leaving situations of domestic violence provide immediate help. Job training programs and village savings-and-loan programs help support women's livelihoods. Training in human rights ensures that women and men work together to protect the rights of women, girls and the entire community.

VIRGINIA'S STORY

Read aloud to the group or invite someone to read.

Virginia is 17 years old and lives in Mozambique. Two years ago she was diagnosed with HIV. When Virginia's family found out that she had HIV, they disowned her.

A group member reads card 1, then posts it:

Every 60 seconds, a young woman becomes infected with HIV. In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of infection among young women between the ages of 15 and 24 is double that of young men of the same age group. (avert.org)

For a family in Virginia's culture, women are the primary caregivers. Because of this Virginia had to stop going to school when she was 9 so she could stay home and help take care of her younger siblings. With little education, it is hard for Virginia to get a job that would provide the money she needs to support herself now that she is on her own.

A group member reads card 2, then posts it:

Only 32.7 percent of women in Mozambique are literate. (CIA World Fact Book)

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

What are some of the doors that open up for young people who can read that Virginia may see as closed to her at this time?

Without a way to earn enough money to support herself, Virginia is homeless. People in the community know Virginia is HIV-positive, and it is hard for her to find family or friends who will take her in.

A group member reads card 3, then posts it:

Discrimination against those who are HIV-positive can lead to loss of income and livelihood. In Mozambique, where nearly 70 percent of people live below the poverty line, this added stigma can make challenging circumstances even more severe. (International Center for Research on Women)



Virginia would like to someday fall in love and have a family, but because she is HIV-positive, she has little hope of finding a husband.

A group member reads card 4, then posts it:

Stigma against women with HIV can alienate them from relationships, especially marriage. (International Center for Research on Women)

With few options and a family who has disowned her, Virginia goes to live in the urban slums of Maputo, Mozambique, where women are subject to violence.

A group member reads card 5, then posts it:

In a U.N. study, 54 percent of women interviewed had been physically or sexually assaulted in Mozambique, and this number is rising. (UNIFEM)

While living in the slum, Virginia meets Beatrice, a community nurse, who begins to take care of Virginia. Because Virginia decided to be a part of the community health program, she is receiving nutritious food that helps make her medicine as effective as possible. The community health program is supported by ELCA World Hunger.

As Virginia spends time with Beatrice and participates in the community health program she begins to feel better about herself. It has been a long time since Virginia had someone to talk to who was not afraid to be around her or treated her with dignity in spite of her diagnosis. Beatrice visits Virginia regularly and listens to what is happening in Virginia's life and how she is feeling.

Beatrice, other community nurses and local activists are working with Virginia's community to educate people about HIV and AIDS to reduce the stigma associated with this disease. Education is a key component in the work of ELCA World Hunger.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Beatrice asks Virginia to share her story and participate in an upcoming event in her neighborhood that is being sponsored by the community health program. How might Virginia feel about being asked to share her story? What might make her feel happy or nervous to share? What might encourage or discourage her from sharing? If you

were in Virginia's shoes, what would you do? What can the community learn from Virginia?

Virginia's health is improving and she feels healthier every day. She is feeling well enough to become more active and agrees to share her story. Even though illiteracy limits some of the ways she can communicate, her time with the community health program gives her confidence to tell others more about herself.

TO READ OR NOT TO READ

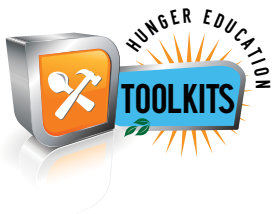
In many cultures, literacy is one of the most important factors in social and economic success. But in cultures that rely on oral communication, taking part in the marketplace or the public square can often mean more than knowing how to read and write. Programs supported by ELCA World Hunger often go beyond mere literacy, helping young women like Virginia gain confidence in expressing themselves in a variety of ways.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Virginia feels she has two options: go to school or continue participating alongside Beatrice with the community events while trying to find a job. What would you do if you were in her shoes? What new opportunities could education open up for Virginia? What would it feel like to try to learn to read as an adult?

Virginia trusts Beatrice to guide her, so she asks for advice. Beatrice tells Virginia that the community health program encourages all of the women who participate to go to school so she can find work that she will enjoy.

Because of the health care and nutritious food Virginia received through the community health program, she is now healthy, able to walk, cook, and take part in community activities. When the community listened to her story, Virginia became more confident in herself and what she had to offer others. With the help of other workers in the program, Beatrice found a school that will allow her to take classes and still participate in the community activities.



Virginia's story gives hope and strength to others living with HIV and AIDS in her community.

QUESTION FOR WHOLE GROUP

What is the role of the community health program in Virginia's story? What impact does the community health program have on Virginia's life? Why do you think ELCA World Hunger invests in programs like this? What can this church learn from the stories women like Virginia can share?

Card 6:

ELCA World Hunger is the primary way this church supports ministries like community health programs. From HIV and AIDS support, advocacy and treatment in Latin America and Africa to helping hospitals better serve patients in India and the Holy Land, ELCA World Hunger supported more than 75 health-related programs with nearly \$3.8 million in 2015 alone.

DANIELLE'S STORY

(Note: this story is drawn from the real experiences of several transgender young adults who have experienced poverty in part because of discrimination based on their gender expression. Trinity Place Shelter is a real community, and that portion of "Danielle's" story is based very closely on one inspiring member of that community.)

Danielle is a 21-year-old transgender woman living in upstate New York. At birth she was named Daniel. Danielle, then called Danny, often felt disjointed from the body she was born with, and starting at about age 6, when people called Danny "him," Danny would correct them and say "her." Spunky and creative, Danny made friends with boys and girls and did really well in school. She wore "boy" clothes until about age 12 but then started to dress more and more like the girls at school.

Even though it had been several months, Danny's middle school classmates didn't always understand. They asked, "Why would a boy dress like a girl?"

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Danny was experiencing peer pressure to dress in more masculine clothing. How might Danny feel when people ask questions like that?

Danny said, "I just like these clothes better," even though it was really hard not to feel hurt or even angry. Sometimes she would go through periods of trying to wear masculine clothing again, but it never felt right. Because of the pressures on her, as well as her own feelings, she has often struggled with body image. It felt like an act. Through middle school and high school, Danny was often teased and bullied.

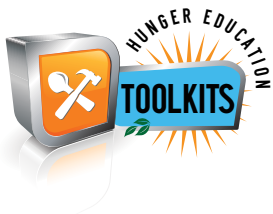
A group member reads card 1, then posts it:

According to a national study by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 75 percent of transgender youth feel unsafe at school. And those who are able to persevere in school have significantly lower GPAs, are more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety and are less likely to plan on continuing their education. (transequality.org/issues/youth-students)

A while back, Danny went to a youth group event at her family's church. At the end of the event, the youth minister told her that if she kept dressing in feminine clothes and referring to herself with feminine pronouns, she would not be saved. After similar experiences in other churches, she now refuses to go when invited. "A church is not a safe place for me," she says.

She confides to her friends that there are few places where she feels safe and valued. When she started her first job at a department store, the manager forced her to put "Daniel" on her nametag and refused to listen to her.

Things aren't better at home, either. Her father left when she was still very young, and her mother isn't supportive. When Danielle first started wearing feminine clothes, her mother teased her and said, "You will quickly grow out of this!" Sometimes, her mother's temper became violent. When Danielle was 17, her mother kicked her out of their home, telling her to come back when she is ready to "man up."

**A group member reads card 2, then posts it:**

Between 20 percent and 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or questioning). The primary reason they cite for their homelessness is severe family conflict.

(<http://nationalhomeless.org/issues/lgbt/>)

Danielle sometimes stays with her friends or in a cheap motel until the end of the school year. She graduates, even though her grades have dropped since she got kicked out of her home. Not knowing what else to do, Danielle takes a bus from her home in upstate New York to New York City to look for work and, maybe, a new life. She is hopeful at first, but after several weeks of struggling to find a job, she is scared that she might not be able to make it. Her interviews go well at first, but when employers see her driver's license that lists her legal name and gender, they tell her "the position is already filled."

A group member reads card 3, then posts it:

In the United States, transgender youth have a particularly difficult time finding work. In some states, it is legal for employers to refuse to hire or to fire someone because they are transgender. More than 1 in 4 transgender individuals has lost a job because of their transgender identity, and half have been harassed while on the job.

(<http://transequality.org/issues/non-discrimination-laws>)

Discrimination and stigma follow Danielle almost everywhere she goes, even as she searches for somewhere to stay, off the street. Sometimes, she is harassed and followed. She knows others who have been attacked for being "like her," and she is scared of being on the streets at night. After days of searching, though, it is clear that she doesn't have a place to stay, and the little money she had when she got to New York City has run out.

A friend tells her about Trinity Place Shelter at Trinity Lutheran Church in Manhattan, a shelter for LGBTQ youth. Trinity Place is a transitional shelter supported in 2014 and 2015 by ELCA World Hunger. Here, young people can stay for up to 18 months while getting the support they need to go back to school, find employment, learn skills like cooking, and find a place of their own to stay.

Group member reads card 4, then posts it:

Shelters can often be far from safe for transgender people. According to survey data, 29 percent of transgender individuals have been turned away from a shelter because of their identity. When allowed in, more than half have been harassed, and 25 percent have been physically assaulted during their stay at the shelter. (National Transgender Discrimination Survey, 2011)

Trinity Place Shelter helps people make connections and use resources to move forward. For example, the shelter's relationship with a local bank helps Danielle set up a bank account right from the shelter. A volunteer helps teach Danielle and the other young people at the shelter how to budget their money once they start earning an income. Danielle is learning how to navigate her life and community in new ways. Since food and other basic-need services like laundry and transportation passes are provided by Trinity Place, she can focus on reaching her goals. To help her process some of the hurt and trauma she has experienced, she speaks with a counselor. The staff care about her, treat her with dignity and make her feel safe.

As she continues to care for her mental health, she also learns a new way to care for her body. A chef at the shelter is teaching her how to cook all kinds of vegetables and how to make tasty, healthy meals on a tight budget.

Trinity Place Shelter does not require the youth who stay there to be a part of a church, as many of the youth are still healing from painful experiences at the hands of religious communities. After meeting a pastor at the shelter, Danielle has some questions, so she goes to worship at Trinity Lutheran Church and talks with the pastor about her spirituality.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

If you were in Danielle's shoes, what "spiritual matters" would you want to discuss? What do you think Danielle might have been thinking and feeling before she walked into the worship service?



They share breakfast, and Danielle tells the pastor how hard it is to believe in God after the many traumatic things that have happened in her life. Still, she feels welcome at Trinity, and she would like to worship there again. However, the church had nearly 100 people at worship, which seems like a big crowd to Danielle, so she asks if there is a smaller service. The pastor suggests she come to the smaller Wednesday evening services during Advent.

As the conversation goes on, Danielle feels safe and wants to be more involved. She offers to volunteer; she really likes cooking since learning new skills at the shelter. Together, the pastor and Danielle make a plan to try something the pastor has heard of but never done before: “Dinner Church” – an alternative worship experience around tables where people eat, talk, reflect on Scripture, sing, pray and celebrate Communion. It goes so well during Advent that they do it again during Lent and twice a month after that!

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Danielle has been the person “in need” or “struggling” throughout her story. How does your understanding of her change when you see her use her gifts and skills? How might our perspective change if we look at people’s gifts instead of only their needs?

Danielle and the pastor discover that something great about Dinner Church is that it attracts people who are hungry for dinner and people who are hungry for church. In fact, the Dinner Church services are among the most popular services at the church!

One week, the church reads the Emmaus story about Jesus walking with the disciples who didn’t recognize him (Luke 24:13-35). Danielle shares how having so many bad things happen makes someone suspicious when good things happen. She explains how hard it is to trust people to walk with you. By sharing, trusting, leading and encouraging others to get involved, Danielle is helping the church shape a vision and share the gospel.

Unfortunately for Danielle, being part of the church doesn’t mean everything magically gets better. On the way to and from the church, she is often laughed at or jeered at by the people she passes on the street.

One day, when a person working at a store insulted her, she yelled at him and stormed out of the store. A friend says that it was good that she stood up for herself. A few days later, after some reassurance from the counselor at Trinity Place Shelter, Danielle has a calm discussion with the manager of the store and explains what had happened. She also apologizes to the person who insulted her. The employee also apologizes for his behavior, and the manager agrees to offer training to employees on their treatment of all customers.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

What things might Danielle want the manager and the employee to know about her? How would you react if you were the manager? What steps could you take to prevent hurtful behavior from your employee in the future?

Danielle has been working hard to keep moving forward. Her pastor tells her that she is resilient; she can adapt to new things and bounce back after facing obstacles. Danielle is starting to recognize her own resilience, too.

After taking time to grow, heal and serve, Danielle is more ready than ever to take another step toward independence and start looking for work. Volunteer lawyers at Trinity Place have helped her to learn more about her rights, and she is able to get a new ID card that identifies her as female. This means her next employer can’t put “Daniel” on her nametag.

Danielle begins work at a local retailer and is able to save money. A social worker from the shelter helps her look for housing, and they find shared housing that is affordable. Thanks to her experience of having to share space and resources at the shelter, she is able to help her new housemates work together to solve some of the frustrations that come with living together. Her cooking skills quickly make her popular in her new home.



On Mother's Day Sunday, Danielle and Jessica, who is also a transgender woman, celebrate the affirmation of their baptism at Trinity Lutheran Church, only now with new names, trusting that God has known and loved them from their mother's wombs. At one time, they closed themselves off in fear of further hurt and rejection like the disciples behind locked doors (John 20:19). But the love of God they experienced in the community at Trinity helps them know that they, too, are beloved children of God and members of the body of Christ.

QUESTION FOR THE SMALL GROUP

Danielle is thinking about her time at the shelter, and she realizes that it wasn't just the place but the relationships and community that mattered the most. Where did negative relationships harm Danielle in her story? Where did positive relationships help her?

To learn more about Trinity Place Shelter, visit www.trinityplaceshelter.org.



FACT CARDS

Women spend, on average, three hours more per day than men on unpaid work in developing countries and two hours more per day than men in developed countries; when all work – paid and unpaid – is considered, women work longer hours than men.

JENNA – CARD 1

70 percent of out-of-school youth worldwide are girls.

JENNA – CARD 2

Human trafficking occurs when people are forced to do labor against their will in industries like prostitution, exotic dancing or massage, or in factories and on farms. The vast majority of sex-trafficking victims are women and girls.

JENNA – CARD 3

Poverty is one of the main factors that lead women to fall prey to human traffickers.

JENNA – CARD 4

Drugs are often used by human traffickers to keep women from running away once they become addicted. Sometimes victims of trafficking are actually trafficked by someone from their own community who has ties to their family.

JENNA – CARD 5

Eight months after being released from prison, an average of 55 percent of people will be unemployed.



FACT CARDS

JENNA – CARD 6

After the first three years of sobriety, people are more likely to remain sober. That means that for at least three years people often need a lot of extra support. Many treatment programs only last a few months.

JENNA – CARD 7

In recent studies, commuting time has been strongly correlated with escaping poverty. Workers and job seekers with long commutes and without access to public transportation may be at greater risk of remaining poor.

JENNA – CARD 8

ELCA World Hunger accompanies women around the world in a variety of ways. Shelters for women leaving situations of domestic violence provide immediate help. Job training programs and village savings-and-loan programs help support women's livelihoods. Training in human rights ensures that women and men work together to protect the rights of women, girls and the entire community.

VIRGINIA – CARD 1

Every 60 seconds, a young woman becomes infected with HIV. In sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of infection among young women between the ages of 15 and 24 is double that of young men of the same age group.

VIRGINIA – CARD 2

Only 32.7 percent of women in Mozambique are literate.

VIRGINIA – CARD 3

Discrimination against those who are HIV-positive can lead to loss of income and livelihood. In Mozambique, where nearly 70 percent of people live below poverty line, this added stigma can make challenging circumstances even more severe.



FACT CARDS

VIRGINIA – CARD 4

Stigma against women with HIV can alienate them from relationships, especially marriage.

VIRGINIA – CARD 5

In a U.N. study, 54 percent of women interviewed had been physically or sexually assaulted in Mozambique, and this number is rising.

VIRGINIA – CARD 6

ELCA World Hunger is the primary way this church supports ministries like community health programs. From HIV and AIDS support, advocacy and treatment in Latin America and Africa to helping hospitals better serve patients in India and the Holy Land, ELCA World Hunger supported more than 75 health-related programs with nearly \$3.8 million in 2015 alone.

DANIELLE – CARD 1

According to a national study by the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 75 percent of transgender youth feel unsafe at school. And those who are able to persevere in school have significantly lower GPAs, are more likely to miss school out of concern for their safety, and are less likely to plan on continuing their education.

DANIELLE – CARD 2

Between 20 percent and 40 percent of homeless youth identify as LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning). The primary reason they cite for their homelessness is severe family conflict.

DANIELLE – CARD 3

In the United States, transgender youth have a particularly difficult time finding work. In some states, it is legal for employers to refuse to hire or to fire someone because they are transgender. More than 1 in 4 transgender individuals has lost a job because of their transgender identity, and half have been harassed while on the job.



FACT CARDS

DANIELLE – CARD 4

Shelters can often be far from safe for transgender people. According to survey data, 29 percent of transgender individuals have been turned away from a shelter because of their identity. When allowed in, more than half have been harassed, and 25 percent have been physically assaulted during their stay at the shelter.



When you have completed the Learning Module(s), proceed to **Module**

3

Closing and ACTION



Ruth and Daw San Myint: Agency and Equity

Module **2**: Learning

Activity Level: **Medium**

Goal: In this activity participants will learn about agency, and the difference between equity and equality by reflecting on the story of Ruth and the modern-day story of Daw San Myint. Participants will be challenged to think about the dependence and vulnerability of women, girls and transgender people in Biblical times and today. They will also use an understanding of equality and equity to begin thinking about programs and services that target the most vulnerable and dependent in order to make them food-secure and empowered with their own agency.

MATERIALS

“Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group), script handouts, whiteboard or other highly visible place to record comments, Daw San Myint story handout and “Equality vs. Equity” graphic (see last page). You may also want to use the “Working Glossary” handout to go over the definitions of equality, equity and justice.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADER

This module is suitable for 60-75 minutes. The activities can be divided into two sessions.

The book of Ruth is a story about women in hunger and poverty trying to survive in a system that discriminates against women. Ask participants to help you bring this story to life. The text has been broken up into parts with narration and dialogue. Assign the parts listed after each chapter heading to specific participants, and ask them to perform their parts according to the script.

Participants can read their parts or act them out. You can also choose to assign parts to set participants for the entire activity or switch parts for each chapter.

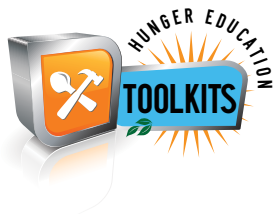
After the verses are read, read the fact about situations of women around the world today. Following these facts,

discuss the questions provided for each chapter. After the story of Ruth, participants will have a chance to read the story of Daw San Myint and think about similar and different issues of agency, dependence and equity in modern times.

Before you begin, ask participants to listen and speak with issues of agency, dependence, and social norms and laws in mind. **“Agency”** is a person’s ability to make their own choices about their life and their body, about who they will be and how they will be. **“Dependence”** is the state of relying on the good graces, protection, livelihood or social status of another person in order to survive. We are all dependent on one another in some ways, but here, “dependence” means a situation that someone is forced into, either by another person or by circumstances beyond their control. A person who is dependent in this way has very little agency. **“Social norms”** are rules of behavior that sometimes go unspoken but nevertheless powerfully shape what we think is acceptable in a society. Often, those who do not follow these norms are shunned or punished in some way.

Between chapters, briefly answer discussion questions and post answers where the group can see them.





RUTH 1

PARTS:

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Naomi, Ruth, Fact Reader, Scripture Reader

Narrator 1: In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and Elimelech of Bethlehem went to live in Moab with his wife, Naomi, and two sons. But Elimelech died, and Naomi was left with her two sons. The two sons took Moabite wives, Orpah and Ruth. When they had lived in the country of Moab about 10 years, both sons also died. Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Narrator 2: Then Naomi heard that the Lord had provided food for God's people in the land of Judah, where Bethlehem is.

So she and her two daughters-in-law went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law:

Naomi: Go back to your mothers' houses. May the Lord be kind to you, since you have lived through the deaths of your husbands. May the Lord grant that you may each find security with a husband.

Ruth: No, we will return with you to your people.

Naomi: Turn back, my daughters, why do you want to go with me? I do not have more sons in my womb who might become your husbands. Go back to your families, for I am too old to have a husband.

Narrator 1: They wept aloud. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

Ruth: Do not ask me to leave you or to stop following you! Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die – there will I be buried.

Narrator 1: When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she said no more. When they reached Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?" Naomi said to them:

Naomi: Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.

Narrator 2: So Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

Fact Reader: Fact: Today, at least 245 million women around the world are widowed and more than 115 million of them live in extreme poverty. In many areas of the world, widows are left with little support and suffer from discrimination and abuse. Many face stigmas against them, have land taken away from them, are either forbidden to marry or forced to marry a relative of their husband's and are more subject to violence, rape and HIV and AIDS. (UN-NGLS)

Scripture Reader: Psalm 68:5 – Father of orphans and protector of widows is God in his holy habitation.

Narrator 2: Naomi knew that life would be very difficult, and the fear and expectation of this make her even ask to change her name.

DISCUSSION

Discuss the following questions, either as a whole group or in small groups that then report to the larger group. Because the following three questions will be repeated after each chapter of Ruth, consider putting them at the top of a large whiteboard or projected document at the front of the room. Add responses throughout the activity as you come back to these questions.

Discussion questions:

1. Where in this chapter did Ruth and Naomi exercise agency? That is, where and when did Ruth and Naomi have the ability to act and make decisions freely and independently?
2. In what ways were Ruth and Naomi dependent on various men for safety, security and the means to provide for themselves in this chapter of the story?
3. What specific social norms, laws and cultural customs limited Ruth and Naomi's options because they were women?



RUTH 2

PARTS:

Narrator, Ruth, Naomi, Boaz, Servant, Fact Reader, Scripture Reader

Narrator: Now Naomi had a kinsman on her husband’s side, a prominent rich man whose name was Boaz. And Ruth said to Naomi:

Ruth: Let me go to the field and gather in the ears of grain behind some reapers, so that I may find favor with them.

Naomi: Go, my daughter.

Narrator: So she went. She went and gathered in the field belonging to Boaz. Just then Boaz came from Bethlehem. He said to the reapers:

Boaz: The Lord be with you. Who does this young woman belong to?

Servant: She is the Moabite who came back with Naomi. She said, “Please, let me glean and gather among the bundles of grain behind the reapers.’ So she came, and she has been on her feet from early this morning until now, without resting even for a moment.

Boaz: Now listen, my daughter, do not go to gather in another field or leave this one but keep close to my young women. I have ordered the young men not to bother you.

(Ruth kneels with her face to the ground)

Ruth: Why have I found favor with you, that you should take notice of me, when I am a foreigner?

Boaz: Everything you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been told to me. May the Lord reward you for your deeds, and may you have a full reward from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge!

Ruth: May I continue to find favor with you, my lord? You have comforted me and spoken kindly, even though I am not one of your servants.

Boaz: Come here, and eat some of this bread, and dip it in the sour wine.

Narrator: So she sat beside the reapers, and he gave her some dried grain. She ate until she was satisfied, and when she got up to gather, Boaz instructed his young men:

Boaz: Let her gather even among the good bundles of grain, and do not speak to her with disapproval. You must also pull out some handfuls for her from the bundles, and leave them for her to gather, and do not reprimand her.

Narrator: So she gathered in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gathered, which was an abundance. She picked it up and came into the town, and Naomi saw how much she had gathered. Then Ruth gave her what was left over after she herself had been satisfied.

Naomi: Where did you gather today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you.

Ruth: The man’s name is Boaz.

Naomi: May the Lord bless him! The man is a relative of ours, one of our nearest kin. It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, otherwise you might be bothered in another field.

Narrator: So Ruth stayed close to the young women of Boaz, gathered until the end of the barley and wheat harvests, and she lived with Naomi.

Fact Reader: Fact: In many countries today, the percentage of women who own land is in the single digits, even though rural women produce half the world’s food. In the Global South, women produce 60-80 percent of the food (ICRW, “Property Ownership for Women Enriches, Empowers and Protects”). Without the right to own land, women often have no means of supporting themselves in times of crisis (UNIFEM, “Women’s Right to Own Property”).

Scripture Reader: Isaiah 5:8 – Ah, you who join house to house, who add field to field, until there is room for no one but you, and you are left to live alone in the midst of the land!



Discussion questions:

1. Where in this chapter did Ruth and Naomi exercise agency? That is, where and when did Ruth and Naomi have the ability to act and make decisions freely and independently?
2. In what ways were Ruth and Naomi dependent on various men for safety, security and the means to provide for themselves in this chapter of the story?
3. What specific social norms, laws and cultural customs limited Ruth and Naomi's options because they were women?
4. What are some present-day examples of women and girls going into harm's way in order to provide for themselves and their families?

RUTH 3

PARTS:

Narrator, Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, Fact Reader, Scripture Reader

Ruth has no money or land and little support. Her future security depends on having Boaz's favor. Naomi tells Ruth to offer sexual favors to Boaz to gain his protection. Due to the nature of this chapter, readers should not act this chapter out.

Naomi: My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that you may be safe and able to take care of yourself. Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. Maybe it's time to make our move. Tonight is the night of Boaz's barley harvest at the threshing floor. Take a bath. Put on some perfume. Get all dressed up and go to the threshing floor. But don't let him know you're there until the party is well under way and he's had plenty of food and drink. When you see him slipping off to sleep, watch where he lies down and then go there. Lie at his feet to let him know that you are available to him for marriage. Then wait and see what he says. He'll tell you what to do.

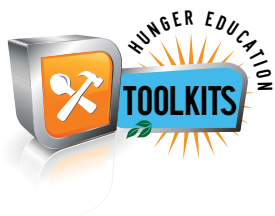
Ruth: If you say so, I'll do it, just as you've told me.

Narrator: So Ruth went down to the threshing floor and did just as Naomi had instructed her. When Boaz had eaten and drunk, and he was in a contented mood, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came stealthily and uncovered his feet, and lay down. At midnight the man was startled, and turned over, and there, lying at his feet, was a woman!

Boaz: Who are you?

Ruth: I am Ruth, your servant; spread your cloak over your servant, for you are next-of-kin.

Boaz: May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter; this last instance of your loyalty is better than the first. And now, my daughter, do not be afraid, I will do for you all that you ask, for all the assembly of my people know that you are a worthy woman. But now, though it is true that I am a near kinsman, there is another kinsman more closely related



than I. Remain this night, and in the morning, if he will act as next-of-kin for you, good; let him do it. If he is not willing to act as next-of-kin for you, then, as the Lord lives, I will act as next-of-kin for you. Lie down until the morning.

Narrator: So she lay at his feet until morning but got up before anyone could recognize another; because he said:

Boaz: It must not be known that you came to the threshing floor. Bring the cloak you are wearing and hold it out.

Narrator: So Ruth held it, and he measured out six measures of barley, and put it on her back; then she went into the city. She came to Naomi.

Naomi: How did things go with you, my daughter?

Ruth: He gave me these six measures of barley, for he said, “Do not go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.”

Naomi: Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest, but will settle the matter today.

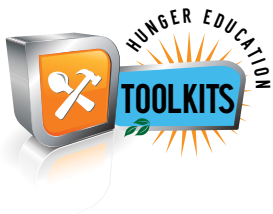
Leader: We have not acted out this chapter due to the graphic nature of what it means in Biblical times to “lie at a man’s feet.” Much like many women today, Ruth was put into a situation in which she was forced to use her body so that Naomi and herself would have food, protection and a home as they attempted to find security in Moab.

Fact Reader: Fact: Poor women in many countries can become victims of trafficking, a crime in which people are treated as possessions to be bought and sold either to provide involuntary labor or to be forced into prostitution or other forms of sex work. About 600,000-800,000 people are trafficked across international borders each year, and millions more are trafficked within borders. The vast majority of sex-trafficking victims are women and girls. (U.S. State Department)

Scripture Reader: Proverbs 31:8-9 – Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Discussion questions:

1. Where in this chapter did Ruth and Naomi exercise agency? That is, where and when did Ruth and Naomi have the ability to act and make decisions freely and independently?
2. In what ways were Ruth and Naomi dependent on various men for safety, security and the means to provide for themselves in this chapter of the story?
3. What specific social norms, laws and cultural customs limited Ruth and Naomi’s options because they were women?
4. What are some present-day examples of women and girls being exploited, or being forced to make choices they otherwise wouldn’t?



RUTH 4

PARTS:

Narrator, Boaz, Kinsman, Elders, Women, Fact Reader, Scripture Reader

Narrator: No sooner had Boaz gone up to the gate and sat down there than the next-of-kin, of whom Boaz had spoken, came passing by.

Boaz: Come over, friend; sit down here.

Narrator: And he went over and sat down. Then Boaz took 10 men of the elders of the city, and said to the next-of-kin:

Boaz: Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our kinsman Elimelech. Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it (buy it back again), redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, so that I may know; for there is no one before to you to redeem it, and I come after you.

Kinsman: I will redeem it.

Boaz: You realize, don't you, that when you buy the field from Naomi, you also get Ruth the Moabite, the widow of our dead relative, along with the redeemer responsibility to have children with her to carry on the family inheritance.

Kinsman: Oh, I can't do that – I'd jeopardize my own family's inheritance. You go ahead and buy it – you can have my rights – I can't do it.

Narrator: In the sale, the land and Ruth become a “package deal.” By purchasing the land, Boaz can make it seem like this is how their relationship began. This also serves as Naomi and Ruth's chance to continue the family line. They will also gain “security” in a foreign land by being connected to a man. Now this was the custom Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one took off a sandal and gave it to the other; this was the manner of attesting in Israel. So when the next-of-kin said to Boaz, “Acquire it for yourself,” he took off his sandal. Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people:

Boaz: Today you are witnesses that I have acquired from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to his sons. I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, to be my wife, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance; today you are witnesses.

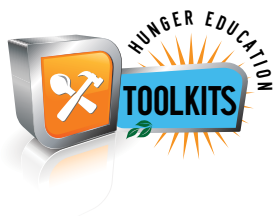
Narrator: Then all the people who were at the gate, along with the elders, said:

Elders: We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you produce children and bestow a name in Bethlehem; and, through the children that the Lord will give you by this young woman, may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah.

Narrator: So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. Later, Ruth gave birth to a son. Then the women said to Naomi:

Women: Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.

Narrator: Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom and became his nurse. The women of the neighborhood named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.



Read aloud:

Dr. Fulata Lusungu Moyo, World Council of Churches program executive for Women in Church and Society, asks some challenging questions of the church today. “In the book of Ruth,” she says, “Naomi had to use Ruth as a younger woman to regain the property and food sovereignty by ‘sexually trading’ herself to Boaz, a rich man much older than her. Are there women who are deprived in our communities today? Have you listened to their stories? And what are you doing to protect these women from such dehumanization?”

Discussion questions for the end of the story:

1. Where in this chapter did Ruth and Naomi exercise agency? That is, where and when did Ruth and Naomi have the ability to act and make decisions freely and independently?
2. In what ways were Ruth and Naomi dependent on various men for safety, security and the means to provide for themselves in this chapter of the story?
3. What specific social norms, laws and cultural customs limited Ruth and Naomi’s options because they were women?
4. In this chapter, Ruth and Naomi’s efforts to marry and have children are tied to security and prosperity. What are some ways women and girls today feel pressure to marry for security or prosperity?
5. Look at the lists of social norms, laws and cultural customs that limited Ruth and Naomi’s options and the ways they were dependent on men. How would those lists look different or similar if Ruth had been writing in the present day?
6. Moyo points out that many women and girls experience similar situations of deprivation and dehumanization today. What are some ways women and girls today are treated unfairly or dehumanized? What can faith communities do to help?

Read aloud to the group:

“We’ve just thought and talked about how social norms, laws and beliefs about gender can limit women and girls’ agency and access to resources, making them

dependent on others for safety and a means to provide for themselves and for their families. Ruth’s story is more than 2,000 years old. But some of the same disparities that lead to dependence are present today. According to the United Nations, “Many women are excluded from economic decision-making within their own households. On average 1 in 3 married women in developing countries have no say about major household purchases, and 1 in 10 are not consulted on how their own cash earnings are spent.” In addition, women are less likely to have access to formal financial services in all regions of the globe. More than 1.3 billion women do not have an account at a formal financial institution, like a bank or a credit union (United Nations, “Women’s World,” 2015). This can make it harder for women to get access to the funds they need to support themselves without a man.

As we read this story, consider the opportunities that access to a microloan provided for a woman in Myanmar.

HAPPY RUNNING THE SHOP – A STORY FROM MYANMAR

Daw San Myint could no longer work in the fields as she used to. She was 67 years old, and the heavy work was too much for her. She tended her small vegetable garden, her chickens and her pig and wondered what the future would hold for her.

At a women’s meeting on finances and microloans, she learned how she could get a loan for a small business and how to manage it. The program is supported by gifts to ELCA World Hunger, working with The Lutheran World Federation.

Before long, Daw San Myint opened a small snack shop near the village school. Schoolchildren often came in to buy a treat, and the shop flourished.

She built on her success with a second loan that made it possible for her to expand her shop’s offerings. Now she stocks rice, cooking oil, diesel and other everyday items, along with the schoolchildren’s snacks. Her customer base has grown to include workers and people living nearby.



Daw San Myint's shop now makes enough profit that she has paid off all her debts and is able to cover her household expenses comfortably. The shop is not only a reliable source of income it has given her more status in the community. Because of her participation in the microloan program, she is able to contribute more toward her village's needs.

"Business is good and I'm happy running this shop," she says with a smile.

Microlending, sometimes referred to as microcredit or microfinancing, is the process of distributing and managing **microloans**. As the name suggests, microloans are small loans often given to people experiencing poverty who do not have access to standard credit or regular banks. A majority of recipients are women. These loans are used to start or grow a business and help people achieve more financial stability.

Many microlending projects require loan recipients to become part of a lending group. Each group member contributes a certain amount and the fund is loaned to one member. Once the first member pays back the loan, another group member receives the funds, and so on. In some cases, loan recipients take part in business education, training and financial counseling before receiving a loan. These additional skills help individuals use their loans most effectively.

Discussion questions:

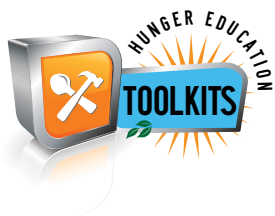
1. What circumstances made it difficult for Daw San Myint to support herself? What made her feel dependent on others?
2. What strengths or assets did she have to improve her situation?
3. What benefits did Daw San Myint and the other women in her community gain from working together?

Read or ask someone to read the following aloud:

Social, cultural and religious norms, laws and customs, both in the United States and around the world, often contribute to problems of poverty and hunger for women, girls and transgender individuals. Certain norms and laws limit agency and increase dependence on men. However, with programs like those supported by ELCA World Hunger, which specifically aim to provide assistance to those who must depend on others to meet their basic needs, people of every gender identity are equipped to be food secure and to share their gifts and talents with others.. Without these programs, women, girls, and transgender individuals would have a more difficult time making free, meaningful decisions about their lives. Programs like these are effective because they involve those in communities who are most vulnerable and least able to get themselves out of situations of poverty and hunger. Because of the social, religious and cultural norms and laws that often create dependence and remove agency, those who are most vulnerable need more services and programming in order to be self-sufficient and food-secure. This means that we have to think about problems of "equity" and not just "equality."

Equality has to do with sameness, promoting justice by giving everyone the same thing. However, equality often assumes that we are all starting from the same place. Equity has to do with fairness, making sure people get what they need in order to have access to the same opportunities. Equity takes into considerations the social, religious, cultural and legal circumstances that need to be overcome in order to achieve food security. In this case, microloans go to those who most need them because those most in need might not have other options for lending.

Invite participants to look at the "Equality vs. Equity" graphic (see below). In this picture, three people are trying to see over a fence. Equality would mean each of them would be given the same box. Equity means each is given what they need to see over the fence. "Equality" and "equity" yield different results.



Discuss these questions together:

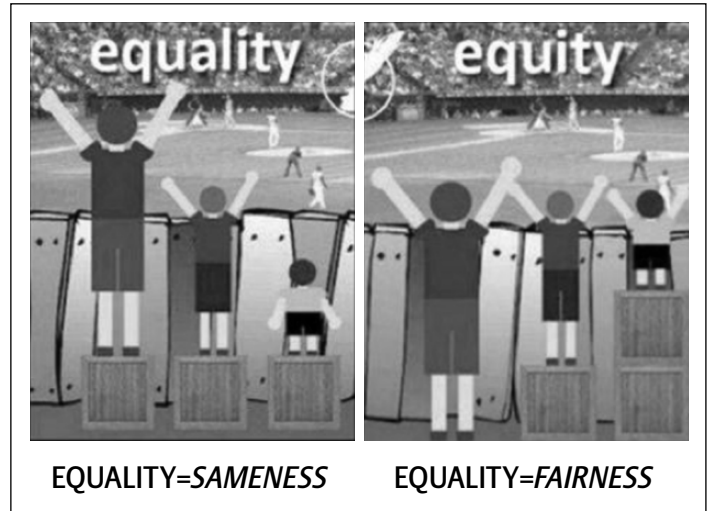
1. What is the difference between equity and equality?
2. Why might more resources need to go to people most in need?
3. What is an example of a program or service that fosters equity by helping people most in need? (Example: Some federal programs help people have enough money to buy food that they need, but not everyone gets this assistance, since many can buy food with their income.)
4. What would have been necessary to help Ruth and Naomi become independent? How are those things different from what is necessary today?
5. Why is it important for Lutherans to be involved in programs like microlending?

CLOSING PRAYER

(from the Sisters of Charity of St. Elizabeth, Convent Station, N.J.)

God of freedom, beauty and truth
we believe that your deepest desire,
your most powerful energy
is that all creation might know abundant life.
We raise our voices in anguished prayer
for our sisters and brothers,
women and girls, men and boys,
who are modern day slaves.
Fill us with your holy anger and your sacred passion
that those who are trafficked might know healing
and justice;
that traffickers will come to repentance and conversion;
that all of us might live in such a way
that others are not made to pay the price
for our comfort and convenience.
Hasten the coming of the day when all people
and our precious Earth itself
will be treated, not as a commodity,
but as radiant images of your freedom, beauty and truth.
Amen. May it be so.

EQUALITY VS. EQUITY



(Source: <http://schoolsofequality.com/equality-v-equity/>)

When you have completed the Learning Module(s), proceed to **Module 3**

Closing and ACTION



Tree of Life

Module **2**: Learning

Activity Level: High

Goal: In this activity participants will hear women’s stories from around the world. These stories highlight the connection between gender and hunger. Participants will hear about how these women were able to participate in ELCA World Hunger supported programs that promote women’s rights and access to resources.

MATERIALS

- “Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group)
- one ball of yarn for each group (recommended group size four to eight)
- fruit cards for each group
- case studies
- butcher paper with picture of a tree, or you can have a participant act as a tree
- pen or marker for each participant
- tape

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTER

This activity includes four women’s stories and the opportunity for participants to think about their own story or the story of a woman in their own life. Depending on how much time the group has, select two or three of the story options ahead of time. If you are working with a large group, split into smaller groups, ideally four to eight people (five to eight if you are having a participant serve as the tree for the activity).

For the women’s stories, have each group sit or stand in a circle facing each other and give each group a ball of yarn or string. As the presenter, read the stories aloud. Each story includes directions for what actions should be taken at each part of the story. Each story comes with its own fruit cards. Cut these out prior to the activity. If you are using a paper tree, participants can place their fruit on the tree, using tape if you wish. If a person is acting as a tree, give each group tape, as each fruit is introduced, the

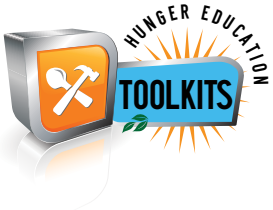
fruit can be stuck onto the person with tape. When each story is finished, discuss the questions provided. Possible answers and points to emphasize are given. Familiarize yourself with each story before the activity so you can better facilitate the discussion questions.

Read aloud:

In this activity, we will learn about the experiences of women around the world. Women are disproportionately affected by hunger and poverty; 7 out of 10 of the world’s poorest people are women (“Gender and Poverty Reduction,” United Nations Development Programme, Sept 2012). Many women and girls are denied the opportunity to go to school, to own land or to own their own business. Women are more likely to work in unpaid or informal jobs. Worldwide, 1 out of 3 women worldwide experiences gender-based violence. Gender stereotypes and social norms perpetuate these injustices. When women who previously were unable to do paid work have the opportunity to earn income, they reinvest 90 percent in their families (Chris Fortson, “Women’s Rights Vital for Developing World,” Yale News Daily, 2003, girleffect.com). Access to education, land and other rights positively impact women, their children and communities. When social barriers are cracked by programs supported by ELCA World Hunger or fall away through policy changes, women are better able to care for themselves and their families and be a vital part of lifting their entire community out of poverty.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God’s work. Our hands.



STORIES

WOGAYEHU'S STORY, ETHIOPIA

Read the following story aloud, slowly. Everything you should read out loud is in *italics*. **Bold** words are a hint that groups should be performing an action. Read these instructions to the group:

As we begin the story, one person should be holding the ball of yarn. As the story is read, listen for hardships experienced by each woman. Gender injustice is a root cause of poverty and hunger and exacerbates hardships. When you hear a hardship named, throw the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle, while holding on to the string, creating a web. State the hardship out loud as you throw the string.

Part 1: Roots

*This is a story of Wogayehu (Who-gah-yay-hoo), a woman living in Ethiopia. Her family lived on a farm, and it was their source of income and food. Because she is a woman, Wogayehu was not trained to run the farm. Her husband was in charge of agricultural tasks. When Wogayehu's **husband died**, she **didn't know how to plow the fields or plant crops**. Without income from the farm, Wogayehu **couldn't afford to send her children to school**. Without enough food from the farm, they often **went hungry**. Wogayehu **lacked the right to make economic decisions** about the farm land. As a widow, she also faced stigma and **discrimination** in her community.*

STOP: Have the group place the web down on the ground. Read this out loud:

Gender and hunger are complex issues, as you can see by looking at the tangled web. Wogayehu faced poverty, lack of education, discrimination and lack of empowerment in the community. This web represents some of the root causes of poverty and hunger. Though the web is tangled and complicated, Wogayehu and her community have the potential to lift themselves out of its hold.

Part 2: Tree

Wogayehu participated in a program through The Lutheran World Federation, supported by ELCA World

Hunger. The program helped Wogayehu get a goat, which helped her and her children get back on their feet.

STOP: Either place the picture of the tree on top of the “roots” or have someone stand in the middle of the “roots,” representing a tree. Read this out loud: *The Lutheran World Federation invests in women with livestock and agricultural training. This project empowered Wogayehu and helped her grow out of poverty. This tree represents this project. The cycle of poverty and hunger is hard to escape, but when we respect the rights and dignity of women and people of all genders and people have access to opportunities and resources, they become a force to crack it.*

Part 3: Fruit

Pass the fruit cards out to participants evenly.

Read aloud:

Since the gift of a goat, Wogayehu's tree has blossomed. One opportunity bore much fruit. As I read this story out loud, place the corresponding fruit card on the tree.

*The goat Wogayehu received produced several quarts of nutritious **milk** each day. The goat's **natural fertilizer** helped grow a small **vegetable garden** outside her home. Little by little, Wogayehu **saved up enough money** from selling milk and vegetables to buy a cow. With her new cow and some agricultural training, she was **able to plow and plant her fields** again. She says The Lutheran World Federation program in her community, which provides assistance with livestock, agriculture, microfinance, water, education and health care, changed her life.*

*Today, both of Wogayehu's **sons are in school** and she is working to **build a new home** for her family. Furthermore, she and other widows have found that in learning new skills they have **overcome some of the prejudice** that women once faced in the community. All women, including widows, deserve to be treated with **respect**.*

“We have come into the light,” Wogayehu said with a smile.



WOGAYEHU'S STORY FRUIT CARDS

milk	fertilizer	vegetable garden
saved money	cow	plow and plant fields
school	new home	overcome prejudice
respect		

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What were some of the ways in which gender discrimination and injustice affected Wogayehu's life?
 - As a woman, Wogayehu was not taught agricultural techniques so after her husband died she could not continue to earn income by farming.
 - Women are denied the right to make economic decisions.
 - There is stigma around widows and discrimination against women.
2. How did Wogayehu and her sons get back on their feet?
 - She participated in The Lutheran World Federation program in her community.
 - She started with getting a goat through the program.
3. What were the outcomes of Wogayehu's resilience, gift of livestock and agricultural training for both her family and community?
 - The goat produced milk, provided Wogayehu and her family with nutrition and income.
 - From selling milk and vegetables from the garden fertilized by her goat, she was able to save money.
 - She used this money to buy a cow to plow the fields, which provided her family with food and an income. Her sons are now going to school, which is important in breaking the cycle of poverty.
 - She is building a new home.
 - People in the community now respect her and other widows.
4. How does this church respect the rights and dignity of women? How does this church fall short?
5. How can we accompany women experiencing discrimination and hardship?
 - re-emphasize theological grounding from opening activity about Galatians

- lift up economic empowerment of women
- re-emphasize the points made in introduction to this activity

NUBIA'S STORY, NICARAGUA

Read the following story aloud, slowly. Everything you should read out loud is in *italics*. **Bold** words are a hint that you should be performing an action.

Read these instructions to the group:

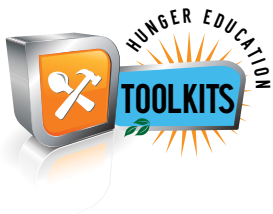
As we begin the story, one person should be holding the ball of yarn. As the story is read, listen for hardships experienced by each woman. Gender injustice is a root cause of poverty and hunger and exacerbates hardships. When you hear a hardship named, throw the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle, while holding on to the string, creating a web. State the hardship out loud as you throw the string.

Part 1: Roots

*This is the true story of Nubia, who lives on a ranch on the outskirts of Chinandega, Nicaragua. Three years ago her **husband died**, and she didn't think she would be able to **keep her land as a widow**. She was also worried that she would **not be able to run the dairy farm** on her own. She had just a few cows. They grazed on nothing but dry underbrush, and they were **producing less and less milk every day**. Worried about the future, **Nubia's children left the country** to find jobs elsewhere. Nubia's future seemed bleak.*

STOP: Have the group place the web down on the ground. Read this out loud:

Gender and hunger are complex issues, as you can see by looking at the tangled web. Nubia had to deal with poverty, lack of education, lack of the right to own land and make decisions on her own, losing her children, discrimination and more. This is her past, her roots. Though her past is messy and complicated, she has the potential to make something powerful out of it.



Part 2: Tree

Nubia learned to grow alfalfa for her cows from the Millennium Challenge Corp., established in part through advocacy efforts of ELCA World Hunger. Through this program she learned good agricultural techniques.

STOP: Either place the picture of the tree on top of the “roots” or have someone stand in the middle of the “roots,” representing a tree. If you are using a person, give them a length of yarn to hold. Read this out loud: *This project helped Nubia grow out of poverty. This tree (person or paper) represents this project. Sometimes the cycle of poverty and hunger is hard to escape, but when women are given an opportunity or a resource, they can be a force to break the cycle of poverty.*

Part 3: Fruit

Pass the fruit cards out to participants evenly.

Read aloud:

Since receiving agricultural training, Nubia’s tree has blossomed and her life has begun to change in many ways. As I read this story out loud, place the corresponding fruit card on the tree.

*Because of the education Nubia received, her **cows are healthier and producing more milk than ever.** She **earned enough money** to buy more cows and now owns a herd of **60 dairy cows** on her ranch. There she **employs nine people**, providing more income for the community, and her cows produce 1,000 liters of milk per day. Each morning, a long line of neighbors forms to buy fresh cheese and dairy products, providing a **source of food for the community.***

*Nubia is **proud** of her work. She is no longer worried about her future. Others in her community treat her with **respect.** She only hopes that her **children** can return and have a successful business like she does. She says, “I named (the farm) Deysi, which is also my daughter’s name. Maybe it’s meant to be hers.”*



NUBIA'S STORY FRUIT CARDS

milk	money	60 dairy cows
employees	food for community	respect
children	self-pride	

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What were some of the ways in which gender discrimination and injustice affected Nubia's life?
 - Her husband died and she had no right to land. She also didn't think she could run the dairy farm on her own. Her cows didn't have good food and were producing less and less milk every day, leaving her with less nutrition and income. Because she feared hunger and poverty, her children left the country to find jobs elsewhere.
2. How did participating in the programs through the Millennium Challenge Corp. impact Nubia's life?
 - Through agricultural training, Nubia learned how to grow feed for her livestock. Her cows grew healthier and produced much more milk, allowing her to earn more money. With this money she was able to buy more cows, producing more milk and jobs for the community and helping her become more financially stable.
3. How does our church respect the rights and dignity of women? How does our church or community fall short?
4. How can we accompany women experiencing discrimination and hardship?
 - re-emphasize theological grounding from opening activity about Galatians
 - listen to needs of women and their communities
 - engage in advocacy
 - lift up economic empowerment of women
 - re-emphasize points made in introduction to this activity

ANNE'S STORY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Read the following story aloud, slowly. Everything you should read out loud is in *italics*. **Bold** words are a hint that you should be performing an action.

Read these instructions to the group:

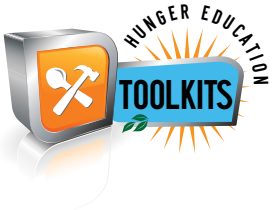
As we begin the story, one person should be holding the ball of yarn. As the story is read, listen for hardships experienced by each woman. Gender injustice is a root cause of poverty and hunger and exacerbates hardships. When you hear a hardship named, throw the ball of yarn to someone else in the circle, while holding on to the string, creating a web. State the hardship out loud as you throw the string.

Part 1: Roots

*This is the story of Anne from South Dakota. Anne has been married to Billy for 15 years. Billy worked in a factory in town and Anne worked in their home. **Daycare was too expensive**, so she took care of the children rather than getting a paying job outside the home. She and Billy's relationship began to change. Billy began to **verbally abuse her**, and eventually the **violence turned physical**. Anne wanted to leave, but if she left, **she would not have a place to live or an income** to support her children. In order to keep her children from going hungry, she decided to stay. One night, the beating got so bad that for her and her children's **safety**, Anne chose to leave. She had no place to go, so she and the children **spent a few nights in their car**. She had a **little money** to feed them, but knew that it would not last much longer. She was afraid that they would not have enough to survive.*

STOP: Have the group place the web down on the ground. Read this out loud:

Gender and hunger are complex issues, as you can see by looking at the tangled web. Anne had to deal with violence, fear, homelessness and more. This web represents some of the root causes of poverty and hunger for women and gender-nonconforming individuals. Though the web is tangled and complicated, Anne has the potential to lift herself out of its hold.



Part 2: Tree

Anne heard about an organization in her area that is supported by ELCA World Hunger called Crisis Intervention Shelter Service Inc. that offers emergency shelter and services for women and families experiencing domestic and sexual violence. Through this organization Anne and her children had a place to stay and were able to get food from the shelter. The organization allowed Anne to consider her choices in a safe and supportive environment.

STOP: Either place the picture of the tree on top of the “roots” or have someone stand in the middle of the “roots,” representing a tree. Read this out loud: *This organization provided Anne and her family with immediate relief and longer-term support as they began to get back on their feet. This tree represents Anne’s participation with the organization. Although the cycle of poverty and hunger is hard to escape, access to opportunities and resources can start their own ripple effect to break the cycle.*

Part 3: Fruit

Pass the fruit cards out to participants evenly. Read aloud: *Since finding Crisis Intervention Shelter Service, Anne’s tree has blossomed and her life has begun to change in many ways. As we finish the story, place the corresponding fruit card on the tree.*

*Crisis Intervention Shelter Service helped Anne in many ways. It provided her and her children with **temporary shelter** so they would not have to sleep in their car. It also provided **meals** for them; they no longer had to fear going hungry. Anne was able to participate in **counseling** to regain her **self-esteem**. The shelter provided **transportation** for the **children to go to school** while Anne applied for jobs. With assistance from the organization, Anne was able to **secure a job** and **find permanent housing**. Anne now **volunteers** with Crisis Intervention Shelter Service to advocate for women affected by violence and to eliminate violence and **stop oppression** of other women in her **community**. Anne’s new home is near an ELCA congregation, and they invite her to share about her work as an advocate through Crisis Intervention Shelter Service.*



ANNE'S STORY FRUIT CARDS

temporary shelter	meals	counseling
self-esteem	transportation	school
job	permanent housing	volunteers
advocate	stop oppression	community

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What were some of the ways in which gender discrimination and injustice affected Anne's life?
 - She was subject to gender-based/domestic/intimate-partner violence.
 - Before leaving her husband, Anne was doing unpaid care work, which means she was unable to support herself and, therefore, stayed with her abusive spouse for a while.
 - There is the stigma of intimate partner and gender-based violence.
2. How did participation in services offered through Crisis Intervention Shelter Services change Anne's life and her children's lives?
 - It provided temporary shelter and meals.
 - Anne was able to recover from abuse and apply for jobs.
 - Her children had a reliable way to get to and from school.
 - Anne found a job and could pay for permanent housing for her and her family.
 - Anne now volunteers at the shelter, helping women in the same situation she was in.
3. How does this church respect the rights and dignity of women? How does this church fall short?
4. How can your congregation accompany women experiencing discrimination and hardship?
 - re-emphasize theological grounding from opening activity about Galatians
 - listen to the needs of women and their communities
 - engage in advocacy
 - lift up economic empowerment of women
 - re-emphasize the points made in introduction to this activity

OUR STORY**Part 1: Roots**

Now that we've heard stories of women from around the world, the group has the opportunity to consider what their roots, tree and fruit might be, or what the roots, tree and fruit of an important person in their life might be. Depending on the size and comfort level of the group, invite people to take time by themselves or with a group of two to three to think about the roots of hunger and poverty that could impact or have impacted their lives or the life of someone close to them, especially women, girls or gender-nonconforming individuals.

Read aloud:

Now that we've heard stories of women from around the world, let's take time to think about our own stories. Take a few minutes to think about your story or think of the people in your life who are women, girls or gender-nonconforming. What are some roots of hunger and poverty that do or could impact your or their lives?

After people have had a few minutes to think and discuss, invite the group back into their circles and hand out a ball of yarn to each group. Read the following instructions out loud:

Return to your circle groups. Take turns stating one of the hardships or root causes of hunger and poverty you thought of, while tossing the yarn to another person, just as we did during the stories. There may be some repeated ideas, which is all right; we have shared experiences.

Part 2: Tree

After each person has had the yarn ball, read aloud:

Place the web on the ground. Our webs are tangled and complex, too. Consider as a group ways in which the hardships and injustices you've shared may be overcome. What might your "tree" be?

**Part 3: Fruit**

Once discussion is slowing, hand out blank fruit cards to each participant. After everyone has a blank fruit card, read aloud:

On the blank fruit card, write down one “fruit” that you’ve experienced in your life, or witnessed in the life of a woman, girl or gender-nonconforming person. What fruit grows from being a part of your congregation or community? After you’ve written down an example, post the fruit card on the tree.



BLANK FRUIT CARDS

When you have completed the Learning Module(s), proceed to **Module 3**
Closing and ACTION



“According to our Likeness” – Gender and Creation

Module **1**: Opening

Activity Level: All

Goal: To reassess our knowledge and understanding of the creation of humanity as described in Genesis. To open awareness of how these foundational stories have shaped our religious beliefs, behaviors and identity. To recognize the limits of language, as well as how language translation and choices determine our understanding of the world and the people around us.

TEXT

Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:7, 15-18, 20-23

MATERIALS

“Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group), Bible, pens/drawing utensils, paper

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTER:

This is not about judging right or wrong ways of thinking. It is about opening awareness of assumptions and how those assumptions shape our perspectives today. Let this discussion set the tone for the next activities. Continue to lift up perception, assumptions, and the various lenses through which we see someone and hear their story.

Speak the words in bold. Action and instructions will remain in regular type. Italicized words are added suggestions.

PRAYERS

God, if only everyone were like me, it would be so much easier. If only everyone were like us, it would be so much easier. Why did you make people so different? How are we supposed to know who is on our side and who isn't? You told us to love one another, but could you make it a little easier? We will accept one another, God. We know we are not perfect. Help us to recognize the gifts of others and to stop demanding that they measure up to the standards we set for them. Help us to love one another just as you have loved us. Amen.

God, your creation is difficult to understand sometimes. Life would be so much easier if we could just organize people into boxes and place them where we want them to be. You put us on this earth for each other, and day after day it just gets more complicated. Help each of us to be brave enough to be who we are, to be what you created us to be. Help us to ignore those who say we “must be this” or “can't be that.” Help us is to see ourselves and each other as the handiwork of the Creator of the universe and loved by you. We want to be what you have created us to be, but we're going to need help. Amen.

(All prayers from The Book of Uncommon Prayer 2 by Steven L. Case)

HYMN AND SONG SUGGESTIONS

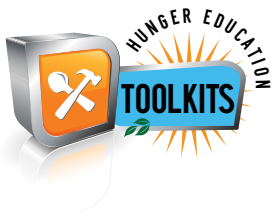
“One Bread, One Body” ELW 496

“We Are Called” ELW 720

“Jesu Jesu, Fill Us with Your Love” ELW 708



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



Begin handing out drawing utensils and paper to each person. Invite participants to draw what they hear as you read **Genesis 1:26-28** aloud, slowly so that listeners can grasp the details. Give everyone time to finish what they’ve drawn, then share their pictures, describing what or whom they’ve drawn. *Groups with five or fewer people can share their pictures and discuss as a large group. If there are six or more people, share in groups of three. After about a minute, open the discussion to the whole group.*

- **What was your favorite part of the picture you drew?**
- **What was the most difficult part to draw?**
- **What was something that surprised you while you were listening and drawing?**
- **What was the most important part of the story?** (Take up to five responses.)

Invite participants to turn their paper over or grab a new sheet, and do the same thing as last time – draw what they hear. **Read Genesis 2:7, 15-18, 20-23.** Once everyone has finished their drawing, share pictures as a large group or in small groups depending on your group’s size. Bring the large group back together and ask: (take only a few responses per question)

- **What surprised you while you were listening and drawing this time?**
- **What stood out to you while you were listening and drawing this story?**
- **What do you think was the most important part of this story?** (Take up to five responses.)

Let’s compare now. Let’s look at these two stories we’ve heard and retold through our drawings. (Take only one or two responses for each question)

- **What do these stories tell us about where we come from?**
- **What, if anything, is missing from these two stories or your pictures?**
- **What do these two stories tell us about being who we are?**
- **What, if anything, do these two stories tell us about gender?**

In the first story, God creates humankind with biological sex characteristics – male and female – all in one swoop of creation. In the second story, there’s a little more play with the Hebrew language, which gets lost in our English translation. In verse 7, when God forms “man” the Hebrew word used means both “human” and “dust” or “earth.” It is not until woman is formed in verses 22-23 that male and female aspects are made clear to the reader or listener of the story. Until then, they are one. While the first humans differ in their biological characteristics, gender roles are not part of creation. How does this use of (or play on) language impact our understanding of gender? Take some time to discuss how these two stories and the use of gendered language has affected our understanding of each other. **What are some examples of how these stories have been used, or can be used, to justify unfairness toward or mistreatment of others?** Discuss.

The things we have found to be most important in these stories feed the ways we live and work together. Let’s focus on one important part, that humans are made “in the image of God.”

What does it mean to be made in the “image of God”?

How would this affect the way you see people?

How is our understanding of gender shaped by our beliefs about creation? How is this changed by our understanding of the “fall”?

How might the “image of God” be empowering for us?

One way people have abused the creation story in Genesis is by claiming that certain people – certain races, genders or ethnicities – were not created in the “image of God.” This justified treating them as less than human.

How does our community affirm the “image of God” in our neighbors?

These two passages from the Bible are not long but point to some deep truths about who we are and whose we are. We are created in relationship with God, each other and all of creation. Many biblical scholars



point out that having “dominion” over creation does not mean humans are better than the rest of creation but rather that they have been given particular responsibilities toward creation and each other. We were not created to have power over one another but to be in partnership and connection with each other, in the likeness of God.

*Gender is complicated. It has to do with **identity** (how we think about and understand ourselves as people with or without gender) but also with how we “**express**” or “**perform**” that gender when we move and act in the world. Those expressions involve the clothing we wear, the activities we do, and the way we interact with others.*

At the same time, we are seen by other people as having gender. In our culture and society, the gender identities and expressions of women, girls and those who are gender-nonconforming are often deemed less valuable, less able, less legitimate and more expendable by those who perceive them. Those who identify and perform masculinity are often assumed to be more intelligent, more trustworthy, stronger and more important by those who perceive them. These values have huge impacts on women and girls’ access to resources and opportunities to have control over their own lives; they have huge impacts on whole communities.

Optional: For further discussion, read Genesis 3. Pay attention to what we think the story means and what it actually says. Remember the use of Hebrew language is different than English and changes the dynamic of understanding. Discuss how this chapter has been used to judge others and excuse behavior, beliefs and actions.

BIBLE READINGS

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion

over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.”

So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Genesis 2:7, 15-18, 20-23

Then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

And the LORD God commanded the man, “You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

Then the LORD God said, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner.” The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner.

So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.”



When you have completed the Opening Module(s), proceed to

Module

2

Learning



(Not) The End of the Story

Module **2**: Learning

Activity Level: **Medium**

Goal: To understand more clearly the root causes for and sustainable solutions to injustices created by discrimination, gender-based violence and intergenerational poverty.

MATERIALS

- “Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group)
- Roots & Outcomes cards (provided)
- A Break in the Cycle cards (provided)
- cycles timeline template (provided)
- internet connection

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRESENTER

Read aloud:

Women and girls will face injustices globally, but it's not the end of the story. These injustices are often cyclical and continue for generations within a community or a family. This activity will examine a few stories of women who are affected by cycles of poverty, sexual exploitation, gender-based violence and poor health due to many causes. But remember, it's not the end of the story. There is hope for the future for all of us.

Read each woman's story and then invite discussion about what big-picture factors were root causes for each woman's story. There are eight Roots & Outcomes cards that can be placed in a cycle after your discussion. These should be laid out in a circle because we know that these root causes and outcomes often work together to perpetuate the cycle of intergenerational hunger, poverty and violence. Once you have finished your discussion on the roots and outcomes, for each story, discuss ways in which the cycle can be broken. Place the A Break in the Cycle cards into the circle at places where her story was affected positively to break the cycle.

SARAH'S STORY, TANZANIA

Jacobson, Mark. "Hidden Shame." The Lutheran, May 2004. Web.

Read the following story aloud:

This is the true story of Sarah, a woman from Tanzania. As a child, Sarah's family was poor and did not have reliable access to food. Because of this, Sarah suffered from a condition called stunting, which resulted in a very short height for her age because her body didn't have enough nutrients to grow taller. When Sarah was a teenager, her family forced her to marry an older man who could support her, like 700 million girls worldwide whose parents cannot afford to feed them (unicef.org/media/files/Child_Marriage_Report_7_17_LR..pdf). While still a teenager, Sarah became pregnant. She did not have access to health care, and because of her age and small size, it was dangerous to be pregnant and even more dangerous to give birth. When it was time for the baby to be born, Sarah had complications and the baby died. Unfortunately, Sarah also suffered from obstetric fistula, a condition that affects millions of women worldwide and leaves them permanently incontinent (unfpa.org/obstetric-fistula). Being incontinent means that Sarah lost control over her bladder and bowels due to the many hours of being in pain during labor. Because she was incontinent, Sarah was considered unclean by her husband, family and community. She was forced to leave her home and her community. None of her friends wanted to have anything to do with her. Alone and without a source of income she wondered how she would get better and when her next meal would be. Having lost her child and now being homeless and hungry, Sarah became depressed.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



One day Sarah heard about Selian Lutheran Hospital on a neighbor's radio. This hospital, supported by ELCA World Hunger, was performing obstetric fistula repair surgeries for free. Sarah had to travel 500 miles to the hospital, but once there, she received treatment and surgery and fully recovered a month later. Since having the surgery, Sarah's life has begun to change in many ways. While at the hospital, she spent many hours learning about the causes of obstetric fistula and planned to become a community health educator when she moved home. Once Sarah's fistula healed, her family and community no longer considered her unclean and she was able to return home. She no longer had to worry about having safe shelter or finding enough food. Sarah began to regain her self-esteem and faced less discrimination in the community. Sarah was able to teach her family, friends and other community members about the causes of obstetric fistula. She even was able to prevent some pregnant women from getting fistula by helping them get to a clinic if they had complications during labor.

Because of the complications from the first pregnancy and delivery, Sarah was very nervous about getting pregnant again and did not want to have more children. However, in many countries, women are not able to tell their husbands that they do not want to have more children. This was the case for Sarah. Fortunately, this time her husband allowed her to go to a clinic to have the baby, instead of staying home, so there was a birth attendant when Sarah began having complications. The birth attendant was able to help, and both Sarah and her baby were healthy.

Sarah had to deal with intergenerational poverty, hunger, marriage at a young age, pregnancy, lack of health care, labor complications, homelessness, discrimination and more. Gender injustice is a root cause of poverty and hunger and exacerbates other hardships women and transgender individuals may encounter. Although the cycles of poverty and hunger are hard to escape, access to opportunities and resources can start a ripple effect to break the cycle.

Place the Roots & Outcomes cards in a visible place, perhaps on the floor or on a table. Ask the following questions:

1. What Roots & Outcomes did Sarah face? How did the Roots & Outcomes relate to each other? Place these cards in a circle.
2. What were some of the root causes of Sarah's hunger and homelessness?

Continue by placing the A Break in the Cycle cards around the circle of Roots & Outcomes cards. Once those have been arranged, ask:

- What are some other opportunities that could have been used to break the cycle of Roots & Outcomes for Sarah?

ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

1. intergenerational poverty
2. gender-based inequality: forced child/teen marriage
3. pregnancy without health care
4. health consequences: death of a child, obstetric fistula, incontinence, depression
5. stigma about incontinence
6. homelessness and hunger
7. stigma about homelessness and hunger
8. inability to get a job to make money

A BREAK IN THE CYCLE CARDS

- free obstetric repair surgery
- education about preventing obstetric fistula
- empowerment of women through education



BRITTANY'S STORY, MONTANA

Read the following story aloud, slowly.

Brittany Smith was born and raised in Arkansas. She had a pretty “normal” life growing up, except that sometimes her parents didn’t have enough money for food by the end of the month. When she was a teenager, her father lost his job and had to move the family to New Mexico to find a new job. Eventually she graduated from high school and attended a local community college for one year.

While in college, she met a man whom she quickly started dating. Joe’s family was well-known, and he was a respected leader in their community. Brittany fell in love and became pregnant. After her daughter was born, Joe’s behavior changed and he became controlling of the small things in Brittany’s life. At first it didn’t bother her; after all, he was just trying to be a good father and protect the baby. But Joe’s behavior soon became more threatening and violent. Like nearly 1 in every 3 women around the world, Brittany became the victim of intimate-partner violence (who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/violence/VAW_infographic.pdf?ua=1). To help her cope with the beatings from Joe, Brittany turned to alcohol. Over time, she realized that she had a drinking problem and checked herself into a program to stop abusing alcohol. After completing the program, life with Joe was not much better. He forced her to have unprotected sex, and she became pregnant again, less than a year after her daughter was born. His violence toward her continued throughout her pregnancy. Brittany didn’t want to be around him anymore, but staying with him seemed like a safer option than breaking up her family and becoming homeless.

After her son was born, Joe’s abuse only increased in frequency and intensity. Soon Brittany was going to an urgent-care facility several times a month because of injuries from Joe. Without a regular doctor, no attendant at the facility saw the injuries as a pattern. Thankfully, he never hit either one of the children. She often would try to reach out to friends and other family members for help, but no one believed her story that Joe, a well-respected

leader, was abusing her. They accused her of lying and making the whole thing up. Finally, she could no longer take the physical, emotional and sexual abuse from Joe, and she packed up her van with as many of the children’s belongings as she could and fled to Montana with her kids. Along the way, she would panhandle at gas stations for money for food and gas. While on their journey to Montana, an accidental fall left the 6-month-old baby with a serious brain injury. Now, they needed a safe place to stay, food and medical care for the baby.

In Montana, they found a shelter for women and children fleeing intimate-partner violence. They were able to find a clinic in Montana for the baby, too. While waiting in the clinic waiting room, Brittany read a flyer for the Helping Hands Fund, a ministry supported by ELCA World Hunger that provides vouchers for many basic needs, such as utilities, food and gas. Brittany was able to pay for her van to get fixed with one of these vouchers. She still faces many challenges – finding a permanent home and a job among them – but she has the support of the shelter and the Helping Hands Fund, and they are helping her make positive connections in the community.

Brittany dealt with intergenerational poverty, food insecurity, intimate-partner violence, stigma, homelessness and more. Gender injustice is a root cause of poverty and hunger and exacerbates other hardships women and transgender individuals may encounter. Although the cycles of poverty and hunger are hard to escape, access to opportunities and resources can start a ripple effect to break the cycle.

Place the Roots & Outcomes cards in a visible place, perhaps on the floor or on a table. Ask the following questions:

1. What Roots & Outcomes did Brittany face? How did the Roots & Outcomes relate to each other? Place these cards in a circle.
2. How did the Roots & Outcomes that Brittany experienced relate to each other?
3. What were some of the root causes of Brittany’s hunger and homelessness?



Continue by placing the A Break in the Cycle cards around the circle of Roots & Outcomes cards. Once they have been arranged, ask:

- We have several opportunities listed that helped break the cycles of hunger and poverty in life on the board in front of us. What are some other opportunities that could have been used to break the cycle of Roots & Outcomes for Brittany?
- How can churches be safe spaces for people like Brittany who are experiencing intimate-partner violence?

ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

1. intergenerational poverty
2. food insecurity
3. intimate-partner violence
4. health consequences for parent and child
5. alcohol addiction
6. stigma about being a victim of intimate-partner violence
7. gender-based inequality: marital rape
8. homelessness

A BREAK IN THE CYCLE CARDS

- shelters for victims of intimate partner violence
- vouchers for basic needs
- alcohol and drug-abuse treatment programs
- health clinics

The church can be a place of refuge for victims of violence by providing spiritual care, support and community. Learn how your congregation can minister with people facing violence by visiting ELCA.org/resources/Justice-for-Women. There you will find posters to display and guides to assist your congregation in this important work.

MIA'S STORY, THAILAND

(pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/2008/08/22/feature-new-life-center/26/#)

Mia grew up with a caretaker on the border between Thailand and Burma. When her parents died, Mia was taken in by a distant relative who forced her to work in an orange-tree orchard as a young girl. Because of the demanding hours she was forced to work, Mia never attended school. Her caretaker took her minimal "salary," forcing Mia to give up what little money she could earn. The pesticides sprayed in the orchard often made her sick. When she was 13, Mia was sexually assaulted by an older male relative.

When she first arrived at the New Life Center Foundation in Thailand, Mia was 13. Because of her lack of education and the severe neglect and abuse she experienced as a child, she had significant developmental delays. The staff at the New Life Center Foundation arranged for her to study in their onsite adult education program. At first, Mia struggled to keep up. She had difficulty concentrating, and years of labor instead of school made otherwise common tasks, like holding a pencil, unfamiliar to her.

It was a challenge, but Mia and her teacher never gave up. They were driven by the hope that Mia would become literate, and after three years of hard work, Mia passed the sixth-grade equivalency exam. Now she is studying at the seventh-grade level, and she can read, write and express her thoughts more clearly. She also participates in the New Life Center Foundation's therapeutic art classes. New Life Center Foundation's comprehensive program helps Mia develop her cognitive, verbal and motor skills. With counseling, the program also helped Mia process the abuse, exploitation and neglect she experienced as a child. She now has the confidence to share her story with others.

Today, Mia continues to express joy that she is literate. "I can actually take the bus now," she says, "because I can read the signs to know where the bus is going!" Mia continues to grow and develop and, with the help of the New Life Center Foundation, she has hope for her future.



Place the Roots & Outcomes cards in a visible place, perhaps on the floor or on a table. Ask the following questions:

1. What Roots & Outcomes did Mia face? How did the Roots & Outcomes relate to each other? Place these cards in a circle. How did the Roots & Outcomes that Mia experienced relate to each other?
2. What were some of the root causes of Mia's hunger and poverty?
3. Continue by placing the A Break in the Cycle cards around the circle of Roots & Outcomes cards. Once those have been arranged, ask:
 - We have several opportunities listed that helped break the cycles of hunger and poverty in life on the board in front of us. What are some other opportunities that could have been used to break the cycle of Roots & Outcomes for Mali?

ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

1. intergenerational poverty
2. marginalization based on ethnicity
3. lack of education
4. labor exploitation
5. psychological consequences from abuse and neglect
6. internal shame
7. health consequences from unsafe work and sexual abuse
8. instability

A BREAK IN THE CYCLE CARDS

- safe spaces for victims of abuse and neglect
- education
- advocacy for work safety
- advocacy against child labor
- learning to read and write

GIRL EFFECT

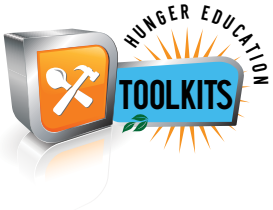
Watch: [youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1e8xgF0JtVg)

We just learned the stories of women who have been the victims of sexual exploitation and gender-based violence. As we saw, violence, exploitation and inequality often work together to make it difficult for women to escape poverty and hunger. As this video explains, girls living in poverty are often the victims of early forced marriage and sex trafficking, which leads to more violence and poverty – but that's not the end of the story. "The Girl Effect" suggests that through adequate health care, education and job opportunities, girls have the opportunity to control their lives in ways that positively impact their community and future generations.

1. How did the stories we read relate to what we heard in "The Girl Effect"? What surprised you in the video or stories?
2. The video tells a very optimistic story about the role of education, job training and other programs. What "breaks in the cycle" seem most effective? Which were new to you?
3. How does your response to this video and the stories we've heard today impact your faith? How does your faith inform your response to the stories and this video?
4. What questions were you left with?

After you have discussed the questions above, read aloud the following:

ELCA World Hunger has a strong commitment to working with women and girls by supporting education, job training, and health and empowerment programs all over the globe, including the United States. Your contributions to ELCA World Hunger support this important and life-giving work. In addition, connecting with ELCA World Hunger or your synod hunger team can be a way to partner to support women and girls domestically and internationally.



As Lutherans, we believe that our faith in Christ frees us to love and serve our neighbors: girls, women and transgender individuals in our neighborhoods and around the world. Our unity as the body of Christ means that the harm done to one person is harm done to all of us, and the abundant life and freedom of one means abundant life and freedom for all of us. Our trust and faith in God means that we have hope, expectantly awaiting the fulfillment of all of God's promises to us. This doesn't mean that violence is any less tragic. Faith gives us hope, but it also gives us the courage and the calling to be present with each other when we face violence or abuse, sometimes with God's promise of abundant life and sometimes with God's promise to be with us, even in the midst of our suffering.



ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>intergenerational poverty</p>	<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>gender-based inequality: forced child/teen marriage</p>
<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>pregnancy without health care</p>	<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>health consequences: death of a child, obstetric fistula, incontinence, depression</p>
<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>stigma about incontinence</p>	<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>homelessness and hunger</p>
<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>stigma about homelessness and hunger</p>	<p><u>SARAH</u></p> <p>inability to get a job to make money</p>



ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

BRITTANY

**intergenerational
poverty**

BRITTANY

food insecurity

BRITTANY

**Intimate-partner
violence**

BRITTANY

**health consequences
for parent and child**

BRITTANY

alcohol addiction

BRITTANY

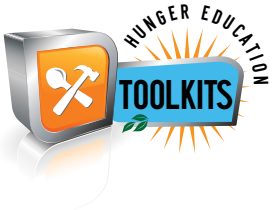
**stigma about being
a victim of intimate-
partner violence**

BRITTANY

**gender-based
inequality: marital rape**

BRITTANY

homelessness



ROOTS & OUTCOMES CARDS

MIA

**intergenerational
poverty**

MIA

**marginalization based
on ethnicity**

MIA

lack of education

MIA

labor exploitation

MIA

**psychological
consequences from
abuse and neglect**

MIA

internal shame

MIA

**health consequences
from unsafe work and
sexual abuse**

MIA

instability



BREAK IN THE CYCLE CARDS

SARAH

free obstetric
repair surgery

SARAH

education about
preventing obstetric
fistula

SARAH

empowerment of women
through education

BRITTANY

shelters for victims of
intimate-partner violence

BRITTANY

vouchers for
basic needs

BRITTANY

alcohol and drug-abuse
treatment programs



BREAK IN THE CYCLE CARDS

<p><u>BRITTANY</u> health clinics</p>	<p><u>MIA</u> learning to read and write</p>
<p><u>MIA</u> safe spaces for victims of abuse and neglect</p>	<p><u>MIA</u> education</p>
<p><u>MIA</u> advocacy for work safety</p>	<p><u>MIA</u> advocacy against child labor</p>

When you have completed the Learning Module(s), proceed to **Module 3**

Closing and ACTION



Survive or Thrive? A Roleplay Board Game

Module **2**: Learning

Activity Level: High

This game is modeled after the life course game by CityMatCH, which can be found at citymatch.org:8080/lifecoursetoolbox/gameboard.php.

Goal: In this activity, participants will be given a persona with starting biological and social factors that will determine their course in the game and in life. Learning about the interplay of social norms, laws and policy, education, violence, access to health care and random chance all have a part in how they move through this game and gain a greater understanding of the reality of hunger and food insecurity in the United States.

MATERIALS

This game is designed for no more than five players per board. If you have more participants, you can team them up or use more than one game board to accommodate the number of participants.

- “Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group)
- one six-sided dice per game board
- five colored game pieces
- game board
- five “game profiles”
- green (GO) cards
- red (STOP) cards
- instruction sheet

INSTRUCTIONS FOR LEADER

Participants will receive a “game profile,” which will identify starting biological and social factors that determine the course of the game as they do in life. The goal is to see in context the ways that gender inequality exacerbates hunger and poverty. Often the root causes of hunger are not systems that are easily or quickly changed.

Players roll a dice for each turn to see how far they can advance. As you will see throughout the course of the game, each participant will have experiences based on those starting biological and social factors, but many other experiences may come from chance.

After the activity, encourage your group to learn more about the many root causes of hunger impacting them or their neighbors in your congregation and community.

This game can be used in a variety of settings, with a variety of age groups. While this is meant to be a “safe space” for reflection, the game deals with some uncomfortable truths. If some participants are uncomfortable playing on their own, encourage them to play on a team with someone to share in the experience.

Read aloud:

Unlike other board games, there are no winners and losers. Learning together is the main outcome, rather than competition. You will be given a starting game profile that will identify biological and social factors to determine your course of life in the game. This game is not meant to be fatalistic, but often the root causes of hunger and poverty are not systems that are easily or quickly changed.

The experience of hunger is rooted in many causes that are a complex interplay of gender, socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, education, geography, policy and law, biology, environment and a variety of other social factors. This game is meant to be an interactive experience to more fully understand the picture of hunger and food insecurity within the United States. This game is not meant to be all-encompassing for every situation a person could find her/himself in that could lead to being hungry, but it does cover many of the root causes of hunger.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.



First, we must define a few things. These definitions come from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx) and will be used in the game profiles.

The definition of hunger can be very broad. The World Food Programme, for example, defines hunger as “not having enough to eat to meet energy requirements.” (wfp.org/hunger/glossary) This definition can also miss some of the other ways that people are “hungry”: spiritually, emotionally and mentally. “Food security” helps us get more specific about needs in a community, so we will be using that concept for this activity.

- **Food secure:** This includes people in the “high food security” and “marginal food security” group. High-food-secure individuals and families have no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations. Marginal-food-secure individuals and families have only one or two reported instances of food insufficiency or shortage within the household within one year. For these people, there is no indication of change in diet or food intake but some anxiety that food will run out. Food-secure families have enough food for an active, healthy lifestyle and can acquire their food in socially acceptable ways (without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies). These families are not eligible for or enrolled in government food assistance programs in this game or in life. (ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx)
- **Moderately food insecure:** This includes people in the “low food security” group who report reduced quality, variety or desirability of diet. They also have little to no indication of reduced food intake. However, they have uncertain availability of adequate and safe foods or uncertain access to foods in traditionally socially acceptable ways (they may use emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies, for example). These individuals and families

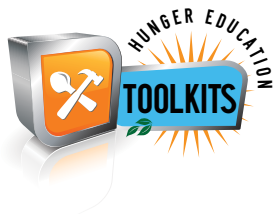
may or may not qualify for governmental assistance benefits, but data has shown that often they do not apply, even if they are eligible. For the purpose of this game, they are not going to be eligible or enrolled in these benefits.

- **Severely food insecure:** This includes people in the “very low food security” group who report multiple instances of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake. Additionally, food may not be able to be acquired in socially acceptable ways (this group may use emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing or other coping strategies). For the purpose of this game, this is the only group of individuals that can be enrolled in or eligible for governmental food assistance programs, unless they have lost their employment.
- **Other helpful terms:**
 - **SNAP:** The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is the largest public domestic hunger safety net program in the United States for low-income families. It provides a small monthly cash benefit to people who qualify. SNAP benefits can only be used to purchase certain items, especially food.
 - **Medicaid:** Medicaid provides health coverage to millions of Americans, including eligible low-income adults, children, pregnant women, elderly adults and people with disabilities. Medicaid is administered by states, according to federal requirements. The program is funded jointly by states and the federal government.

GAME PLAY

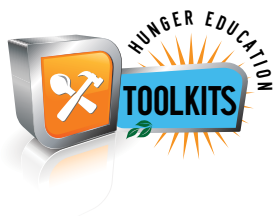
Allow for about 45 minutes to play and discuss the game. A simple agenda may look like this:

- Have games already set up.
- 5 minutes: Introduce game instructions and read definitions of food secure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure game profiles.
- 25 minutes: Play the game.
- 15 minutes: Debrief the game and reflect.



INSTRUCTION SHEET

- There can be five players (or teams) per game.
 - Each player should select one colored game piece that corresponds to the color of their game profile.
 - Read your game profile aloud to everyone seated at the table.
 - Place your colored game pieces on the start.
- The player whose profile is “food secure” starts. After that, go clockwise for player order.
- When it is your turn, roll the dice and move forward that many spaces. Follow the instructions on the space where you land:
 - **Blank spaces:** Do nothing. Your turn is over.
 - **Green and red spaces:** Take a card and follow the directions. Each player should read the card out loud. This is especially important for cards that break down the movement by “food secure,” “moderately food insecure” and “severely food insecure.”
 - Some spaces on the game board have their own scenario; please follow the instructions in the scenario bubble.
- Once you have rolled the dice, landed on your square, and followed the instructions on that initial square, your turn is over. For example, if your scenario bubble tells you to move forward one space, and that movement leads you to a green space, you do not take a green card. Your turn is over after you have moved.
- **STOP square 12:** Advanced Education
 - **EVERYONE must STOP on square 12!** You cannot pass square 12 without following the instructions below. (Hint: If you are on square 8 and you roll a 5 with your dice, you will NOT move to square 13.) Studies have found that doubling the amount of primary education a community receives can lower the risk of hunger by up to 25 percent. Educational disparities especially exist for girls around the world but also for transgender individuals in the United States.
- You must stop at this square to roll the dice.
 - » If your game profile indicates “food secure,” add 1 to your roll.
 - » If your game profile indicates “moderately food insecure,” add 0 to your roll.
 - » If your game profile indicates “severely food insecure,” subtract 1 from your roll.
- If your final count is:
 - » **0-2** = You needed to work long hours at three part-time jobs in order to pay for tuition. Your work hours conflict with your class schedule and you aren’t able to continue classes. Lose your next turn.
 - » **3** = You attain no further education, stay where you are.
 - » **4** = Your school closed the satellite campus closest to you, so you must now commute several hours each day for class. Advance one space. Do not follow any instructions on the square you land on.
 - » **5** = New legislation cuts the funding for Pell grants, and your tuition cost increases. Your family is able to cover the greater expense; roll the dice and advance per your roll. Do not follow any instructions on the square you land on.
 - » **6-7** = You receive a full-ride scholarship to attend a four-year college and complete your bachelor’s degree. Roll the dice and advance per your roll plus two spaces. Do not follow any instructions on the square you land on.
- **STOP square 40:** Remainder of Life and Legacy
 - **EVERYONE must STOP!** You cannot finish the game without completing the instructions below. After everyone has reached square 40, the game is over.
 - You must stop at this square to roll the dice. If you roll a:
 - » **1** = You die from a long battle with diabetes and heart disease in your late 40s.
 - » **2** = Your spouse/partner passes away, and you experience a period of major depression



preventing you from working and earning enough money for groceries.

- » **3** = You retire but must supplement your income with a part-time job.
- » **4** = You retire and your Social Security benefits barely cover your expenses. You manage to get by until a medical emergency forces you into bankruptcy.
- » **5** = A small pension and Social Security won't make you wealthy, but they do help you keep your home and food on the table well into your retirement.
- » **6** = Your retirement package is sufficient enough to live in a nice retirement community; you live to a ripe old age.

- And:

- » If your game profile is “food secure,” your family continues to be food secure for their lives. Hearing about the work of ELCA World Hunger, your family decides to contribute via the Monthly Partners program to ensure that your sisters, brothers and transgender individuals in Christ can also someday become food secure.
- » If your game profile is “moderately food secure,” you have been greatly impacted by the work of ELCA World Hunger throughout your life. It has been there at the lowest moments of your life. Though you cannot guarantee food security for your family forever, you give money periodically to ELCA World Hunger to continue the programming that has helped you through life. Thanks to the programs that help you move toward independence, you steadily move closer to being food secure throughout your life.

- » If your game profile is “severely food insecure,” alongside governmental benefits, programs funded by ELCA World Hunger have been the lifeblood to keep your family fed. You don't have the ability to give money to the programs, but you donate time. By volunteering, you have instilled an incredible work ethic in your family, leaving a legacy of serving others. Because many programs help promote independence, you may move closer to food security throughout your life.

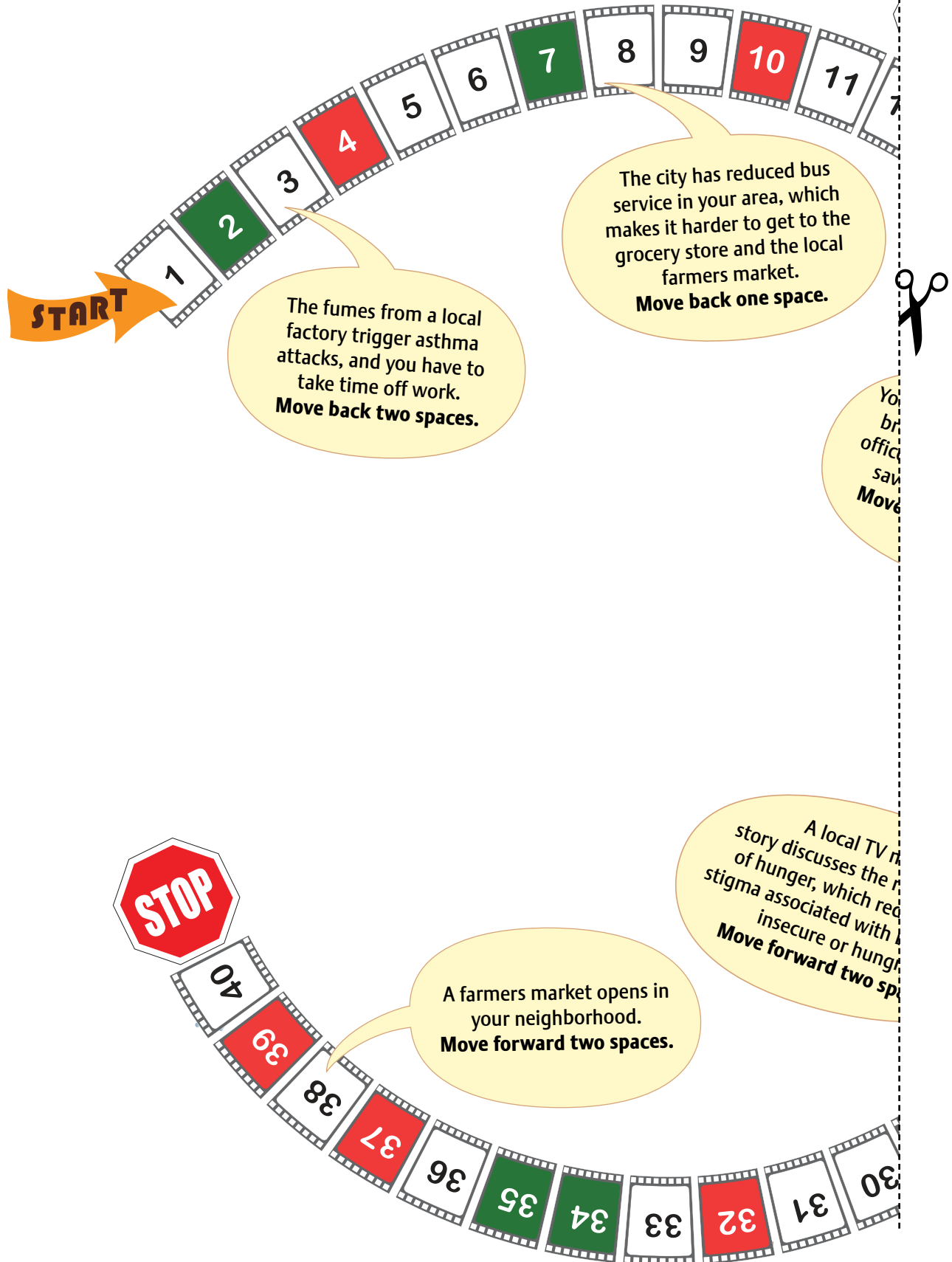


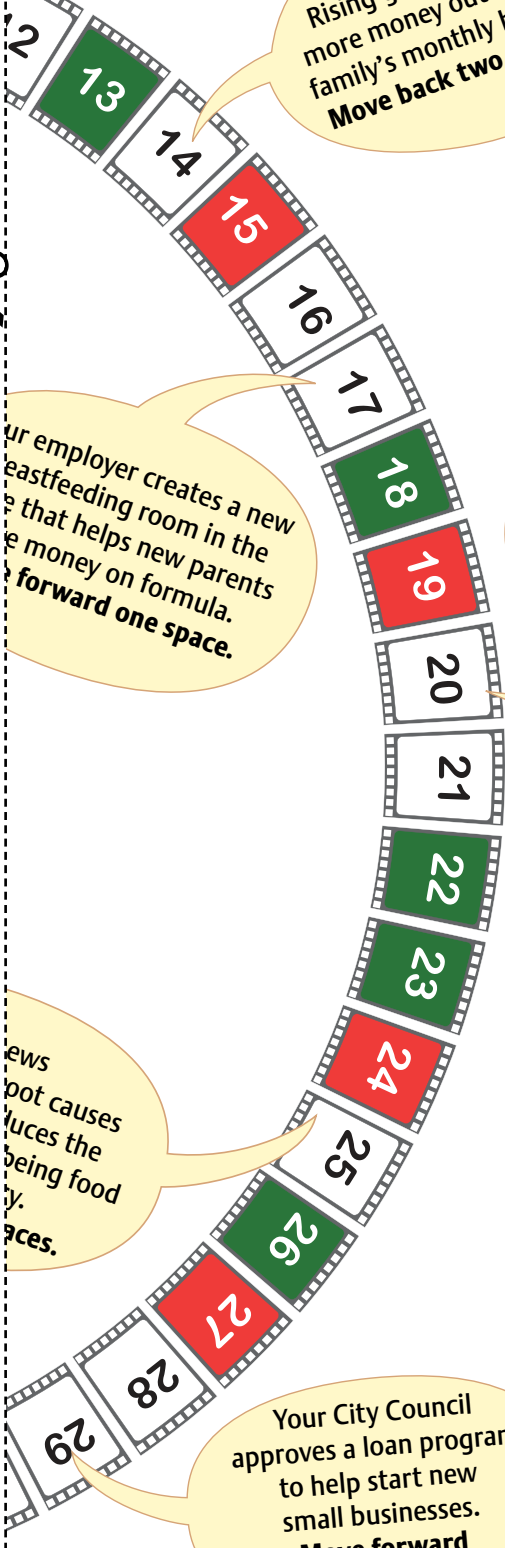
GAME BOARD

Survive or Thrive? A Roleplay Board Game

Module 2: Learning

Activity Level: High





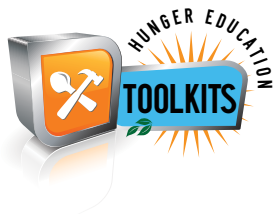
Rising gas prices take more money out of your family's monthly budget.
Move back two spaces.

Your employer creates a new breastfeeding room in the office that helps new parents save money on formula.
Move forward one space.

The lack of a living-wage ordinance in your city makes good-paying jobs hard to come by.
Move back two spaces.

News about a food bank causes the community to donate more food.
Move forward one space.

Your City Council approves a loan program to help start new small businesses.
Move forward one space.



GAME PROFILES

1. (purple)

- a. **Gender:** male
- b. **Race/ethnicity:** African American
- c. **Education:** some college
- d. **Employment status:** employed – personal trainer
- e. **Food secure**

2. (blue)

- a. **Gender:** female
- b. **Race/ethnicity:** Hispanic
- c. **Education:** high school
- d. **Employment status:** employed – waitress
- e. **Moderately food insecure**

3. (yellow)

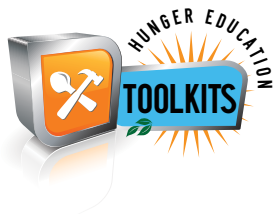
- a. **Gender:** transgender
- b. **Race/ethnicity:** African American
- c. **Education:** some college
- d. **Employment status:** sporadic employment
- e. **Moderately food insecure**

4. (red)

- a. **Gender:** female
- b. **Race/ethnicity:** Caucasian
- c. **Education:** some high school
- d. **Employment status:** employed – meat packing industry
- e. **Severely food insecure**

5. (green)

- a. **Gender:** male
- b. **Race/ethnicity:** Caucasian
- c. **Education:** trade school/community college
- d. **Employment status:** employed – dishwasher at restaurant
- e. **Severely food insecure**



GREEN (WALK) CARDS

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- Your neighborhood grocer carries fresh, affordable produce. This keeps you healthier.
 - Move forward one space.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A one-step enrollment for benefit programs, such as SNAP and Medicaid, is available.
 - Food secure** = You do not need SNAP or Medicaid benefits. Move forward one space.
 - Moderately food insecure** = You are not eligible for these benefits. Stay where you are.
 - Severely food insecure** = Your family is eligible for Medicaid and SNAP. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A large national company opens offices in your city. More jobs are available and your salary increases. The owners, however, refuse to hire workers whose gender identity differs from the gender of their physical body.
 - If you are a male, move forward five spaces.
 - If you are a female, move forward three spaces.
 - If you are transgender, move back one space.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A local ELCA congregation opens a food pantry.
 - Food secure** = You do not need the assistance. Stay where you are.
 - Moderately food insecure** = By volunteering, you receive one bag of food per month. Move forward one space.
 - Severely food insecure** = You receive two bags of food each month. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A new bus route can now take you to the urgent-care clinic for your yearly wellness check and to the grocery store for your weekly grocery needs.
 - Food secure** = You have a personal vehicle, stay where you are.
 - Moderately food insecure** = You benefit from spending less time traveling from home to the clinic or store and back. Move forward one space.
 - Severely food insecure** = You benefit because you were previously unable to access the clinic or the store without having to find a ride from a friend. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- When you became pregnant, you had access to prenatal care, including advice on healthy eating for you and your baby. This improves both your health and your baby's.
 - Move forward three spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A local clinic provides free vitamins to people who cannot afford them.
 - Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- You discussed your health and wellness goals with your doctor.
 - Move forward two spaces.



GREEN (WALK) CARDS

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- Community organizers supported by ELCA World Hunger invite you to be part of a campaign to improve public transportation and the state agrees to provide funding.
 - Move forward one space.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A variety of free after-school programs are available at your child's school. Students learn important social skills, get help with homework and get lots of exercise. They also serve a nutritious snack to every participant to reduce nightly hunger pangs.
 - Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A job promotion gives you a 10 percent raise. This is more money in your bank account each month.
 - Move forward three spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- ELCA Advocacy is part of a coalition of religious groups that advocates for increased funding for the federal Women, Infants and Children program. With this funding, you will have access to food and nutritional education as your baby grows.
 - Move forward three spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- A community garden is started by neighborhood residents on your block.
 - Move forward one space.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- The local homeless shelter provides a brown bag lunch each work day to anyone. You don't have to face the stigma of not having enough food for today.
 - **Food secure** = You do not need this service. Stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure and severely food insecure** = Without this brown bag lunch, you would have skipped lunch today. Move forward one space.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- Your county decides to allow SNAP benefits to be used at farmers markets. You now get \$20 per month to spend on locally grown, fresh produce.
 - **Food secure** = You do not need SNAP. You can purchase your own farmers market produce. Move forward one space.
 - **Moderately food insecure** = You are not eligible for these benefits. Stay where you are.
 - **Severely food insecure** = Your family gets SNAP benefits, so you are able to purchase more fruits and vegetables. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- You check out a "how-to" book on gardening from your public library. The book also offers free seeds to start your garden. Your green thumb gets you fresh vegetables for one small salad per day!
 - Move forward one space.



GREEN (WALK) CARDS

GREEN (WALK) CARD

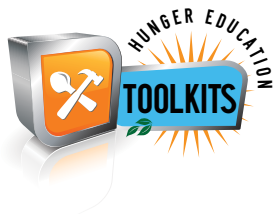
- ELCA Advocacy efforts to increase SNAP benefits were successful! You are now eligible for more money per month for food.
 - **Food secure** = You do not need SNAP. Stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure** = You are not eligible for these benefits. Stay where you are.
 - **Severely food insecure** = Your family gets SNAP. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- An increase in funding to the free and reduced-cost meal program at your or your child's school enables implementing a universal breakfast program. Now every student can get a free breakfast at the start of each day.
 - **Food secure** = You or your child already has breakfast daily, but now it's free! Move forward one space.
 - **Moderately food insecure** = Your or your child's attention improves thanks to not being distracted by feeling hungry. Move forward one space.
 - **Severely food insecure** = You or your child now gets two free, nutritionally balanced meals at school every school day, helping maintain focus during the day improving school performance. Move forward two spaces.

GREEN (WALK) CARD

- ELCA World Hunger provides seed money to start a new summer meal program during the workweek for three months during the summer.
 - **Food secure** = You or your child does not attend the summer meal program. Stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure and severely food insecure** = You or your child gets one free, nutritionally balanced meal per day, five days a week. This greatly reduces your weekly grocery bill. Move forward two spaces.



RED (STOP) CARDS

RED (STOP) CARD

- Your neighborhood health clinic shuts down. It is harder to get access to medical care.
 - **Food secure** = You have medical insurance, but because of high co-pays you used the neighborhood clinic for some services. Move back one space.
 - **Moderately food insecure and severely food insecure** = You have no other means of medical care nearby. Move back two spaces.

RED (STOP) CARD

- The city cuts funding for public transit. You now must drive to work and spend 25 percent of your budget on gas.
 - **Food secure** = You have a vehicle, but the gas price increase requires you to give up some privileges you enjoy. Stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure and severely food insecure** = You do not have a car or the money to pay for gas or parking. You have difficulty getting to school and work. Move back four spaces.

RED (STOP) CARD

- Sugary drinks were often the cheapest choices at the local market, but now you must pay for dental care for cavities.
 - Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- The main breadwinner of your family loses his or her job. Your family loses health insurance. Because they are not working, your food assistance benefits have decreased.
 - Move back five spaces and deduct one from each roll going forward.

RED (STOP) CARD

- The state cuts funding for schools, and the after-school tutoring program you or your child was in has been canceled.
 - Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

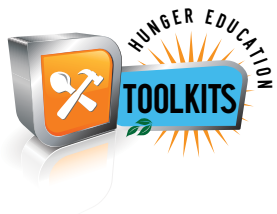
- Racial discrimination in hiring makes it harder for you to find a job.
 - If your game profile race is non-Caucasian, you may experience discrimination when applying for jobs. Move back two spaces.
 - If your game profile is Caucasian, you may benefit from a smaller pool of applicants that employers will hire. Move ahead one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- A study finds that women in your state are paid less and promoted less often than men, regardless of their performance.
 - If your game profile gender is female, move back two spaces.
 - If your game profile gender is male, move ahead one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- ELCA Advocacy efforts to increase SNAP benefits were unsuccessful. Each benefit program had significant cuts to their budgets and you get fewer food dollars per month.
 - **Food secure** = You do not need SNAP. Stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure** = You are not eligible for these benefits. Stay where you are.
 - **Severely food insecure** = Your family relies on SNAP. You must find a new way to find food at low costs. Move back three spaces.



RED (STOP) CARDS

RED (STOP) CARD

- Your state passes a law protecting employers' rights to not hire transgender individuals. If your profile lists you as transgender, move back three spaces.

RED (STOP) CARD

- There is increased stigma in your community regarding food insecurity and hunger due to an online video of someone allegedly abusing SNAP benefits.
 - **Food secure** = You do not use SNAP benefits; stay where you are.
 - **Moderately food insecure** = Although you are likely eligible for SNAP benefits temporarily, the stereotype of being a “welfare mom” is too much. You forego the possibilities of benefits this month and experience hunger. Move back two spaces.
 - **Severely food insecure** = Although you are embarrassed to use your benefits, you must rely on these to make it through the month. Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- The food pantry in your community closes due to lack of volunteers.
 - Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- Your city bans feeding programs on all public property. A community meal in one of the city parks must shut down.
 - Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- Severe weather and animals damage your community garden crops.
 - Move back one space.

RED (STOP) CARD

- You have recently been diagnosed with HIV. Due to the high cost of your medications, you have less money for other expenses.
 - Move back two spaces and subtract one from every roll for the remainder of the game.

RED (STOP) CARD

- Housing costs are rising fast in your area. Instead of losing your home, you shift money from your food budget to your rent budget each month.
 - Move back four spaces.

RED (STOP) CARD

- You have recently been diagnosed with a rare food allergy. Your food costs skyrocket.
 - Move back three spaces.



RED (STOP) CARDS

RED (STOP) CARD

- You overhear your boss saying that he would prefer not to hire more women because “they cost so much money in insurance premiums, and they need time off when they get pregnant.” You want to file a complaint, but you are worried about losing your job.
 - If you are male, move back one space. A lack of gender diversity weakens your company’s creativity and performance.
 - If you are female or transgender, move back three spaces. Lack of gender diversity is hurting your career options, but, unfortunately, there is not much you can do about it at the moment.

RED (STOP) CARD

- A recession has led to huge losses in your pension just before you retire. Social Security might help, but you know you will have to keep working to pay your bills.
 - Move back one space.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What events from the game do you recall? Which events surprised you? Why?
2. What advantages or disadvantages came with each game profile? Did some of them seem better or worse than others while playing the game? Is there anything actually better or worse about being any of the people on the list?
3. What circumstances could you control? What circumstances were outside of your control?
4. What role did race, ethnicity or gender play in the game?
5. What events in the game reminded you of your own life experiences?
6. Were you ever in the lead in the game? If yes, how did that make you feel? Were you ever falling behind in the game? If yes, how did that make you feel?
7. How did laws and policies affect your situation? When were they helpful? When were they harmful?
8. In what ways was the church present throughout the game? Relief? Advocacy? Community organizing?
9. What does the game tell us about some of the causes of hunger?



When you have completed the Learning Module(s), proceed to **Module**

3

Closing and ACTION



Module 3 : Closing and ACTION

Activity Level: All

Closing and Action

Goal: The goal of this module is to summarize the key learning points and to give concrete steps your congregation or group can take to fight poverty and hunger by working for gender equity and equality.

MATERIALS

“Commitments for a Safe Conversation” handout (unless already shared with the group)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PRESENTER

Before gathering, go through the list of activities in this module. Pick one or two that you can use to close your time together. Some of the activities require significant planning and preparation, so you may want to use this closing and action time to create a committee or delegate various responsibilities. After you are finished with the activity (or activities), conclude with a song and prayer from the opening module.

Share your story with ELCA World Hunger! Tell ELCA World Hunger about how your group used this toolkit or the next steps you are planning. Email hunger@ELCA.org to share your story.

Read aloud:

Have group members read the following aloud to prepare for the activity:

In the waters of baptism, we are made clean and welcomed as children of God. We are sent as a liberated people into the world to both “put on Christ” (Romans 13:14) and to seek Christ in our neighbors.

Throughout Christ’s life, the world tried to define him by his ethnicity, class and religion, but Christ resisted easy classification. We know that many people expected him to exercise power in traditional ways, ways that were often

identified with masculinity. They expected a military leader or a king; what they got was a carpenter who defended and befriended women, tax collectors and people on the margins. Jesus did not conform to expectations of how a Jewish man would act, nor did he conform to how the Messiah was expected to be. His true identity, which even a centurion recognized, was revealed in his suffering, broken body on the cross (Mark 15:39).

When God became human, God took the form of a human on the margins and threatened the status quo. Where is Christ? In the Gospel of Mark, the first time Jesus is acknowledged clearly as the Son of God is when he is crucified. On the cross, when Jesus appears to be at his most powerless and most vulnerable, God is revealed. Yet, in this picture of weakness, Christ tore down barriers between the powerful and the marginalized and offered each person an equal share in the inheritance of God. How are we called to do the same? Where do we see Christ today, or where do we see the cross today?

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1-2).



**Ask the group:**

The world tries to make us conform each day in how we think, act, or treat others. That is why it is important that we spend time like this learning together as people of faith. What are some ways that our minds have been changed, transformed or renewed today? (Allow a few minutes for discussion- remind the group about the commitment to creating safe space that was made at the beginning of the activity, if applicable.)

In our time together we have explored the connections between gender and hunger. Hunger and poverty are complex issues, and their effects are often multiplied for women. When the rights of women, girls and gender nonconforming individuals are protected and they have the opportunity to exercise them, great progress can be made against hunger. When these rights are not protected, women, girls and gender nonconforming individuals often suffer the consequences of hunger disproportionately.

Ask:

How are we being asked to participate in God's active work in the world of transformation and change so that people of all gender identities and expressions can feel welcome and be fed?

Main ideas to review:

- Women tend to experience hunger and poverty at higher rates than men. This is due to unequal social and legal rights, lack of educational and economic opportunities, gender-based work (fetching water, agriculture etc.) and many other factors.
- Hunger and poverty also exacerbate gender inequality and discrimination, creating a cycle of poverty and inequality. Some examples of this include gender-based violence and human trafficking. Both of these can prevent women from seeking or taking advantage of opportunities they may have to get out of poverty.
- When given equal opportunities, women have the power to alleviate poverty. Women tend to invest more money back into their family and community, including using more money for food and education.

When women are educated and given economic opportunities, birth rates decrease, health increases, income within the family and the community increases, helping to lessen poverty and its effects.

The disproportionate rates of women experiencing hunger and poverty in our world will not end without our **action**. All of our actions, even small ones, add up to make a big difference.

INSTRUCTIONS

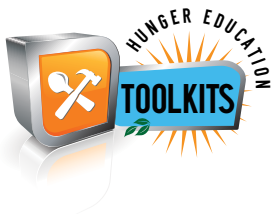
Below is a list of takeaways – actions – related to today's gathering that can be incorporated right away to help end hunger and poverty in our world.

After doing the activity (or activities), take some time to talk as a group about the other ideas listed here. What can we do together? What can we do individually? Who else can we invite to join us? This is certainly not a comprehensive list, and the group may create a list of its own!

Please share with ELCA World Hunger ways your congregation is working to end hunger around the corner and around the world. Share your story at hunger@elca.org or post to the ELCA World Hunger Facebook page – facebook.com/ELCAworldhunger.

PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- **Prayer circle**
Invite each person in the group to write a short prayer lifting up women who are oppressed, abused, are not treated as equals, and are suffering from hunger and poverty. Compile the prayers onto one sheet and copy for each person. Ask participants to pray this week for women around the world using the prayers created by the group. Share them with the pastor and worship team leader and encourage them to be incorporated into next Sunday's worship prayers or any other Sunday!
- **Ongoing prayer**
Continue to remember women in prayer throughout the church year. During the season of Pentecost, consider using Women of the ELCA's "Pentecost, Prayer and Power" resource to lift up in prayer concerns for



women's health, violence against women and clearing the “red tape” that keeps people from being fully empowered. Download the resource at goo.gl/v3xiD0.

GIVE, VOLUNTEER, GROW

- **Not-so-microloans**

Sometimes all it takes is a little money. Hold a fundraiser to provide women with a microloan. By raising anywhere from \$50 to \$500, a woman is able to start her own business, increase her income, and help herself, her family and her community out of poverty and hunger. To learn more, watch the ELCA World Hunger video of Virginia Quispe's story. Download the video and a discussion guide at ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Click on the “Stories & Videos” tab.

- **Back to school**

The opportunity to receive an education can open so many doors for a girl or woman. Many times girls are unable to attend school because the family cannot afford the expenses. By putting together school kits with your congregation or community, you can ease the cost of an education for a girl or woman. Learn more about how your congregation can create school kits for women around the world through our trusted partner Lutheran World Relief. To learn more, visit <http://lwr.org/get-involved/build-kits-of-care/school-kits>. Offer a special prayer of protection and care for those who will receive the kits before you mail them.

- **The gift of water**

The average woman walks 3.7 miles a day to get water for her family. Not only is this task physically difficult, but it is also time consuming. Because women must make this trip daily, it leaves them with less time to go to school or run their own business. By giving just \$10, a woman can receive six water buckets to make the trip easier. Want to do more? By raising \$150 you can provide a woman with a hand pump to make it easier to get water. With \$275 you can give the gift of a cistern! Check out <https://community.elca.org/elca-good-gifts/water> to see what your gifts can do.

- **Close to home**

According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, women experience about 4.8 million intimate partner-related physical assaults and rapes every year in the United States alone. Call a local crisis center and ask them how your congregation can best support their work. This may mean volunteering, but it can also mean doing a gift drive for supplies or donating money. Asking the local organization or center first can make sure that your help is as effective as possible.

ADVOCATE

- **Stay connected**

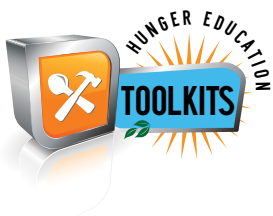
Sign up for the ELCA e-Advocacy Network and receive action alerts on timely legislative issues that help end hunger in the world. Keep a lookout for issues related to gender equality! Visit ELCA.org/advocacy.

Connect with your ELCA state public policy office and learn about opportunities to act in your state on behalf of those who are most vulnerable. To see if your state has an office or to learn more, visit ELCA.org/advocacy.

- **Power of the pen**

Write a letter to your elected officials about a topic you received from an e-Advocacy alert. Find out who your officials are by visiting ELCA.org/advocacy. For directions on how to write an advocacy letter or prepare a phone call to an elected official, see the Climate Change and Hunger Toolkit's “Closing and Action” module. You can find this at ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Click on the “toolkits” tab.

If one of the issues you learned about today sparked your interest, write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper to express concern for gender inequality and to encourage others to support public policies that empower women and end poverty.



- **Coffee talk**

Meeting with your members of Congress is one of the best ways to advocate for the issues you care about. They want to know the concerns of their constituents. By visiting their offices or inviting them to attend a public event or meeting, you are building a personal relationship while asking them to take leadership in working for those most in need. A step-by-step guide on how to make this happen is available at ELCA.org/en/Resources/Advocacy

EDUCATE YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- **Connect with others who care**

Follow ELCA World Hunger on Facebook and Twitter! You can find up-to-date news about resources, current events and stories about the work ELCA World Hunger supports at facebook.com/elcaworldhunger or by following World Hunger on Twitter, @ELCAworldhunger and @ELCAadvocacy.

At blogs.ELCA.org/worldhunger you can read and subscribe to the ELCA World Hunger blog for faith reflections, stories and up-to-date information on hunger.

Connect with your synod's hunger team and learn what others in your area are doing – and join them. To learn more, contact your synod office or ELCA World Hunger at hunger@elca.org.

- **Dig deeper**

Want to learn more about human trafficking? Check out the Human Trafficking curriculum developed by ELCA Justice for Women at ELCA.org/Resources/Justice-for-Women under the “Human Trafficking” tab. Explore the rest of the resources to learn about violence against women, sexism and theology.

- **Invite a speaker**

Reach out to a local crisis center or the National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence to find someone who can share their experiences with your congregation or group. This can be a great way to learn about the root causes of gender-based violence and how your congregation can help.

- **Make connections**

When it comes to many hunger and poverty issues, women tend to suffer disproportionately. Check out more gender and hunger connections in other hunger education toolkits at ELCA.org/hunger/resources. Learn about the connection between women and water in the High Learning Activity in the Water Toolkit, and learn how climate change affects women in the Watch and Learn: “Sisters on the Planet” module in the Climate Change Toolkit.

- **Reel fun**

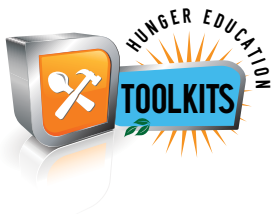
Get together a group from your congregation or community and watch a film about women and hunger. Some of our suggestions include:

- “A Place at the Table” available at magpictures.com/aplaceatthetable/
- “A Walk to Beautiful” available at pbs.org/wgbh/nova/beautiful/program.html
- “Pray the Devil Back to Hell,” widely available. To order a DVD or find a local screening to go praythedevilbacktohell.com.
- Oxfam’s “Sisters on the Planet.” DVD available from ELCA World Hunger by emailing hunger@elca.org or calling 800-638-3522, ext. 2696. You can also watch the film on the Oxfam website: oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/climate_change/sisters/. Check out the discussion guide in the Climate Change Toolkit.
- “A Powerful Noise,” theconnexion.com/apowerfulnoise/apowerfulnoise_index.cfm

RAISE AWARENESS AND MORE

- **Give me a hand**

Hold a “These Hands are Not for Hurting” campaign in your congregation, school or community. Set up a table where people can trace their hands on paper and cut them out, or have pre-cut hands available. Have people sign a hand, pledging against violence. Have educational materials about violence against women available. Display the hands in a public area to show that violence is not accepted in your community.



- **Stop traffic for trafficking**

Gather a group of people and head to your church parking lot one Sunday morning. Make signs to advertise your cause. Stop cars as they enter the parking lot in an effort to stop trafficking. Provide facts about human trafficking, have them sign a letter to an elected official, or ask for funds to support ELCA World Hunger. You can get more information about human trafficking from Women of the ELCA. Visit goo.gl/bBSZiL to learn more.

- **Get out your oven mitts!**

In your congregation, school or community, hold an Inequality Bake Sale to highlight the wage gap between men and women in the United States. Have people donate items to sell, and charge people different amounts based on their gender and the current wage gap statistics (pewrsr.ch/1arGNjE). For example, a male buying a cupcake would pay \$1 while a female would pay \$0.80, since in 2014 a woman earned \$0.79 for every \$1 a man earned. Donate your earnings to ELCA World Hunger.

- **Carry a card**

The National Human Trafficking Resource Center has victim outreach cards that fit in a wallet, pocket or purse. On one side of the card is a national hotline phone number. On the other side, there are indicators of human trafficking. You can download these cards at traffickingresourcecenter.org/resources/sex-trafficking-victim-outreach-card.