



Episcopal Charities
A Commitment to Caring

Episcopal Charities Sunday

A Primer for the Congregation

Episcopal Charities - the Outreach Arm of the Diocese - supports 80 programs based in 50 parishes throughout our diocese. These programs focus on youth education and mentoring, housing, addiction, prisons, immigrants, HIV/AIDS, eldercare, job training and feeding.

At the 2007 Diocesan Convention, delegates adopted a resolution permanently designating an annual "Episcopal Charities Sunday." On that day, parishes are asked to take a special offering for Episcopal Charities to further support 33 feeding programs throughout the Diocese.

Why?

Hunger is an ongoing and growing problem in all of our communities. With the economic decline resulting in more of our neighbors under-earning and unemployed, and our elderly feeling the pinch of trying to make ends meet on fixed incomes, often once the rent is paid, the food budget has been depleted. Episcopal Charities supports congregationally-based feeding programs throughout our diocese that address the pressing needs of men, women and children who need hot meals and food to keep them nourished. Help us help those in need.

Here is a short list of resources and program ideas to help your parish support this effort and help ease the hunger pains of people who cannot afford to feed themselves or their families.

Prepare your congregation

We've included everything you need to let your parishioners know about Episcopal Charities Sunday: a poster, bulletin insert from Bishop Sisk, Sunday School and youth group materials, food insecurity statistics, and a three-minute DVD about Episcopal Charities. All of these materials may also be downloaded from our website: http://episcopalcharities-newyork.org/news_022.htm. In addition, we have provided individual offering envelopes that you may want to distribute the week before you observe Episcopal Charities Sunday.

We are all fed at Christ's altar

So we have included prayers and litanies that you might like to use on Episcopal Charities Sunday. They are beautifully written and remind us of Christ's charge to us to feed the hungry in our midst.

Involve your children

Episcopal Charities Sunday is a great opportunity to teach our children to realize that others are hungry and that they can do Christ's work. Have your Sunday School teach about hunger and the Gospel – we've included some fun activities to involve your children. Encourage your kids to take their own collection – however many pennies it may yield – and invite them bring up their collection at the offertory to be blessed. Ask your teen group to host a fundraiser, serve at coffee hour...see additional ideas in this primer!

The offering itself

We've included envelopes you can use to collect donations, or you can take a second plate collection...whatever your preference. Send Episcopal Charities any checks you receive, and send a parish check for cash donations.

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of men, women and children who will directly benefit from your donations on Episcopal Charities Sunday...thank you.



THE EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE OF
NEW YORK

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**March 7th 2010: Episcopal Charities Sunday
Collection to support feeding programs in the Diocese of New York**

In these difficult times I am especially moved to recall to your attention the vital role that the feeding programs of Episcopal Charities – the official outreach arm of our diocese – play in the lives of thousands of God’s children who are in desperate need.

The 33 parish-based feeding programs supported by Episcopal Charities make a critical difference to individuals in communities throughout our diocese. They include soup kitchens, food pantries, brown bag lunches, food delivery to the elderly and meals for persons living with HIV/ AIDS. In 2009, they served more than a million meals to our neighbors in need. Over the past year, they have consistently reported increases in demand of 10-20%, and in some cases the increase has been dramatically greater. This comes at a time when government and food bank resources are declining, making it increasingly difficult for them to serve those most in need.

These are, unquestionably, hard times for nearly everyone. But while we may all feel financial strains, we do not all live with the risk of imminent hunger.

I very much hope that on Episcopal Charities Sunday March 7th, you will be moved to offer your full support.

I thank you for your generosity.

Faithfully,

+ Mark

THE RIGHT REVEREND MARK S. SISK
BISHOP OF NEW YORK

1047 AMSTERDAM AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10025 T: 212.316.7412 F: 212.932.7318 E: BPSISK@DIOCESENY.ORG WWW.DIOCESENY.ORG



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BISHOP OF NEW YORK
1047 AMSTERDAM AVENUE NEW YORK, NY 10023 T: 212.562.4123 F: 212.502.2218 B: 8P1518@DIOCESNY.ORG WWW.DIOCESNY.ORG



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Litany – Remembering God’s Provision for Us

A: O God, our Provider, you created us and fed us. (Gen 1:26-31)

B: You called us out of slavery into a land of milk and honey,

A: And fed us in the desert on the long journey into that abundance. (Ex. 16:1-36)

B: You established your covenant with us that we might receive the bounty of your blessings as we dwell in harmony and justice.

A: “Obey all the Lord’s laws and commands and you will have all you want to eat and will live in safety.” (Lev. 25:18-19)

B: In your wisdom, you arranged periodic corrections of our tendency toward accumulation and injustice.

A: “Every third year, set aside a tithe of food for the Levites, who have no inheritance, the aliens, orphans, and widows, that they may eat within your towns and be filled.” (Deut. 14:28-29 and Deut. 26:12-13)

B: “Every seventh year, cancel the debts of those who owe you money.” (Deut. 15:1-6)

A: “The fiftieth year shall be a Year of Restoration, a Year of Jubilee, when slaves will be returned to their families, debts forgiven, property restored to original owners, and freedom proclaimed to all inhabitants of the land.” (Lev. 25:8-10)

B: In your special caring for the marginal ones, you established a safety net to provide for those falling through the cracks.

A: “When you harvest, leave some for aliens, orphans, widows.” (Deut. 24:19-22 and Lev. 19:9-10)

B: “When a countryman becomes poor, be generous to him. The poor will be with you always, so be generous to them.” (Deut. 15:7-11)

A: When we lost sight of your justice, thereby rendering our worship empty, your prophets spoke out to correct us.

B: “Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke,

A: “to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?”

B: “Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,

A: “and bring the homeless poor into your house?” (Isaiah 58:6-7)

B: Your son began his public ministry proclaiming the Year of Jubilee, the freeing of the oppressed and good news to the poor. (Luke 4:18-19)

A: He cared for the hungry in feeding the multitudes. (Matt. 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17 and John 6:1-14)

B: And was willing even to violate the law so that his disciples would have food to eat. (Matt. 12:1-8)

All join: Make us aware, O God, of our responsibility to carry out your will in provision for those in need. Amen.

(From “Moving Beyond Band-Aids” by the California Council of Churches)

Other Prayers and...

Almighty God, we thank you for making the earth fruitful, so that it might produce what is needed for life: Bless those who work in the fields; give us seasonable weather; and grant that we may all share the fruits for the earth, rejoicing in your goodness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

(Collect from The Book of Common Prayer)

Creator God, we pray to you from the midst of your creation. We ask you to love and sustain this Earth; and to love and sustain us, who cling to it as it spins on its course through the cosmos.

Teach us to love the Earth as you love it: help us not to take it for granted. Creator God, you made us in your image: teach us to be good stewards of your creation. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.

(Episcopal Peace and Justice Ministries Jubilee 2000 Manual)

Lord, to those who hunger, give bread. And to those who have bread, give the hunger for justice.

(Latin American Prayer from www.eco-justice.org)

The hungry man needs bread and the homeless man needs a roof; the dispossessed need justice and the lonely need fellowship; the undisciplined need order and the slave needs freedom. To allow the hungry man to remain hungry would be blasphemy against God and one's neighbor. It is for the love of Christ, which belongs as much to the hungry man as to myself, that I share my bread with him and that I share my dwelling with the homeless. If the hungry man does not attain to faith, then the guilt falls on those who refused him bread. To provide the hungry man with bread is to prepare the way for the coming of grace.

But what is happening here is a thing before the last. To give bread to the hungry man is not the same as to proclaim the grace of God and justification to him, and to have received bread is not the same as to have faith. Yet for him who does these things for the sake of the ultimate, and in the knowledge of the ultimate, this penultimate does bear a relation to the ultimate. It is the *penultimate*. The coming of grace is the ultimate.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945), *Ethics*

Sunday School Activity 1

Being a Good Samaritan in Our Community (Luke 10:30-37)

Materials:

- Chairs set up to simulate the inside of a bus
- Butcher paper, food ads, pictures, coupons to make collage
- Paper bags—one per child
- Markers
- Printed prayers for bags
- Letter to Parents explaining activity and how their families can support local efforts to combat hunger



1. As children enter the room, ask them to work on a “Favorite Foods Collage” by cutting out and drawing pictures of some of their favorite foods and gluing them on the butcher paper. Ask several children to share about how much food we have available to us and whether or not all boys and girls have so many choices.
2. Ask the children if they are ready to take a trip. Share with the children that they will be boarding a bus to visit a local food pantry. Discuss these terms. Talk about who might come to a food pantry, and what happens there.
3. Ask the children to line up and board “the bus.” After the children have taken their seats, tell them that they are going to hear a Bible story as the driver heads to the food bank. Then tell the story of the Good Samaritan (in your own words). Afterwards, ask the children what they think Jesus was trying to explain with this story. Discuss helping the “other.”
4. Pretend to look out a window of the bus and see the food pantry. Describe to the children what you see: a church; people waiting in line to go in; others coming out with bags. Talk about who and what they would see inside. Remind the children that people are there because they are hungry and need food. Discuss what food they might get and how they will take it home for their families.
5. Let the children know that they must head back home. On the way, ask the children who they saw today who needs help. Discuss how they might be Good Samaritans for the people they saw. Let the children know that when they are older, they can actually volunteer at soup kitchens to help prepare and serve food to hungry people. However, at this time, there is another way that everyone can help: by collecting food for the food pantry. Ask the children to decorate paper bags which they will use to collect food for the food pantry.
6. After the bus reaches home, the children can “unload” and sit around tables to decorate their bags. They can write or cut out the prayers for their bags. If the local food pantry has special needs, encourage the children to write or draw specific requests on their bags, e.g. soups or cereals.
7. As children are picked up by their parents, check that each child has his/her paper bag, and the “Letter to Parents.”

Sunday School Activity 2

Understanding the Plight of the Hungry

Materials:

- Poster board or cardstock, at least 8½ x 11 inches
- Markers
- Magazines with lots of photos and illustrations for cutting
- Scissors
- Glue sticks

1. Print the following saying on a chalkboard or newsprint:

A person who has food has many problems;
A person who has no food has only one problem.
- Chinese saying

2. Ask the children to read the saying together and to think about it for a moment, without talking about it.
3. Invite their ideas of what this saying means. If you need a question to prompt the conversation, ask: "What kind of problems might people who have enough to eat still have?" After they have named some possible problems, ask: "What problem would a person with no food have?"
4. Provide art materials for the children to make posters to bring the plight of hungry people to others.

From: http://www.pcusa.org/hunger/downloads/hae_activities.pdf.



Youth Group Activity

Feeding a Family Game



Form four groups of children (or children and adults). Give each group a paper describing its family and income. Each group is to plan a nutritious menu for one day, based on the money it has.

When they have finished, have them present their menus. Invite them to talk about the ease or difficulty in making the decisions and to compare the results.

Then read Matthew 14:14-21 to the group. Ask, "Why do you think Jesus wanted food for the people?" After they have talked about this question, encourage them to think about what God wants for all people. From this point, move to a prayer for people who are hungry or a discussion of ways the group can work to help hungry people, using another activity from this packet.

Family 1: There are three people in your family. You have \$18 to spend on food for one day. How can you use this money to provide a nutritious menu? (Costs are for the meal for the whole family.)

Breakfast for three people Dinner for three people
Cereal and fruit: \$2 Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$5
Frozen waffles and fruit: \$3 Hot dogs and soup: \$4
Toast: \$1 Dinner at a pizza place: \$15

Lunch for three people Snacks for three people
Cheese sandwiches: \$2 Ice cream: \$4
Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$4 Fruit: \$2
Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$2 Cheese and crackers: \$2

Circle your choices. How much will your menu cost:
per day _____, per week _____, per year _____?

Family 2: There are five people in your family. You have \$18 to spend on food for one day. How can you use this money to provide a nutritious menu? (Costs are for the meal for the whole family.)

Breakfast for five people Dinner for five people
Cereal and fruit: \$4 Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$8
Frozen waffles and fruit: \$5 Hot dogs and soup: \$6
Toast: \$2 Dinner at a pizza place: \$20

Lunch for five people Snacks for five people
Cheese sandwiches: \$4 Ice cream: \$6
Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$6 Fruit: \$3
Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$4 Cheese and crackers: \$4

Circle your choices. How much will your menu cost:
per day _____, per week _____, per year _____?

Family 3: There are four people in your family. You have \$8 to spend on food for one day. How can you use this money to provide a nutritious menu? (Costs are for the meal for the whole family.)

Breakfast for four people Dinner for four people

Cereal and fruit: \$3 Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$7

Frozen waffles and fruit: \$4 Hot dogs and soup: \$5

Toast: \$2 Dinner at a pizza place: \$18

Lunch for four people Snacks for four people

Cheese sandwiches: \$3 Ice cream: \$5

Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$5 Fruit: \$2

Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$3 Cheese and crackers: \$3

Circle your choices. How much will your menu cost:

per day _____, per week _____, per year _____?

Family 4: There are four people in your family. You have \$30 to spend on food for one day. How can you use this money to provide a nutritious menu? (Costs are for the meal for the whole family.)

Breakfast for four people Dinner for four people

Cereal and fruit: \$3 Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$7

Frozen waffles and fruit: \$4 Hot dogs and soup: \$5

Toast: \$2 Dinner at a pizza place: \$18

Lunch for four people Snacks for four people

Cheese sandwiches: \$3 Ice cream: \$5

Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$5 Fruit: \$2

Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$2 Cheese and crackers: \$3

Circle your choices. How much will your menu cost:

per day _____, per week _____, per year _____?

Youth Fundraisers and Educational Tools

Rice Dinner – A Tool to Experience the Reality of Hunger:



Select an evening for the youth group to offer congregants a “**Rice Dinner**”. Youth will prepare rice and serve rice and water for dinner. Those attending pay \$5, or an amount you choose for one bowl of rice for dinner and a glass of water.

Educational: Explain that approximately 60% of the people in the world have one bowl of rice per day – and how close to home that reality has become with hungry people living in our towns and cities. Use the statistics about feeding insecurity included in this primer. This exercise provides the opportunity for good discussions about hunger, as well as fun and community-building with the youth who are preparing the event.

Intergenerational: Involve and invite the entire congregation!

Add to the basics: In addition to the entry fee, have guests also bring one or two cans of non-perishable food for donation to a local food pantry. Bring the food up to the altar at the following Sunday’s service to be blessed and acknowledged, and thank the youth and those who attended.

Coin Toss:

Have the youth organize a **Coin Toss**. When congregants arrive for services, have cans out and ask everyone to toss in their loose coins. Youth will be responsible for collecting, counting and donating to Episcopal Charities as part of the congregation’s Episcopal Charities Sunday offering.

Recognize the youth for the amount collected at Sunday services after the offering is finalized and donated.



Coffee Hour Take-Over:

Pick a Sunday for all parish youth to plan and serve at coffee hours. Collect amounts for coffee and food and offer to Episcopal Charities as part of your parish’s Episcopal Charities Sunday donation.

Famine Experience:

Youth organize a “day of fasting” to experience what it’s like to go hungry. At the end of the day, all involved meet for dinner together and discuss the experience. They next volunteer at a local food pantry/soup kitchen together and have dinner/discuss what that meant for them.



HUNGER IN NEW YORK ...SOME QUICK FACTS

Is the Level of Hunger Increasing in New York?

- The number of New York State residents participating in the federal food stamp program as of October 2009 was 2,599,938, an increase of 23 percent over the previous year.
- The Food Bank for Westchester reports a 15% increase in demand for food assistance between July 2008 and July 2009, with some member agencies in Westchester County reporting increases in demand of 100%.
- Throughout 2009, 40 percent—or more than 3.3 million New York City residents—experienced difficulty affording food for themselves and their families. Approximately 1.3 million of these (mostly women, children, seniors, the working poor and people with disabilities) rely on soup kitchens and food pantries.
- In 2009, New York City's emergency food providers (food pantries, soup kitchens, and brown bag programs) reported a 20.8 percent increase in need for their services, with the fastest growth in demand from families with children. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of these emergency food sites in New York City had to reduce the amount of food per person or household; 28 percent of food pantries and 11 percent of soup kitchens had to reduce the days or hours of food distribution due to a lack of food or resources.

Who Are the Hungry?

- 14.8% of children under the age of 18 are food insecure in New York State, according to a recent study by Feeding America, a national anti-hunger organization.
- Of the nearly one million elderly individuals living in New York City, one in four rely on soup kitchens and food pantries to make ends meet.
- 58% of clients receiving assistance from Emergency Food Providers are women; 42% are men.
- 45% of Emergency Food Providers clients in New York State are African American; 27% White; 24% Hispanic; and 5% American Indian, Pacific Islander, Asian or Alaskan Native.

For more information:

Bread for the World: <http://www.hungerreport.org/2010/>

Feeding America: <http://feedingamerica.org/faces-of-hunger.aspx>

Food Bank for NYC: <http://www.foodbanknyc.org/go/food-poverty-in-nyc>

Hunger Action Network of NYS: <http://www.hungeractionnys.org/hungerny.htm>

New York City Coalition Against Hunger: www.nyccah.org/media/annual-hunger-survey