

# Reflection: How will our fast help the poor and hungry?

(45 minutes)

1 of 1

FACE THE FAST

## Objective

Through this activity participants will:

- reflect on their reasons for attending this Food Fast and
- consider how their fasting will make a difference in the lives of the poor around the world.

## Activity Summary

This activity should be done towards the beginning of the Food Fast. Through a process of journaling and sharing, participants will connect their fast with our responsibility to assist our brothers and sisters in need.

## Materials Needed

- copy of *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* handout for each participant
- pens/pencils
- music
- music player
- flipchart paper
- markers
- tape

## Preparation

Ask 4 participants to be readers and provide them with a copy of the reflection ahead of time. Highlight the part you would like each of them to read.

Write each reflection question from *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* at the top of a separate sheet of flipchart paper. Post the paper around the reflection space.

*Option:* Use *Creating a Fasting Atmosphere: Prayer and Reflection Space* for the setting of this reflection.

## Procedure

Invite participants into the prayer and reflection space and provide each person with a copy of the *How will our fast help the poor and hungry?* handout.

Have the readers read their section and then allow 5-10 minutes between each reading for participants to reflect on the reading and respond to the questions. Play a CD of soft instrumental music throughout this activity.

## Debrief

At the end of the reflection, invite participants to share their answers to the questions with the entire group. Write their thoughts, words and emotions on the flipchart paper you have prepared ahead of time. Keep these reflections posted in the Prayer and Reflection Space so during quiet times and breaks participants can continue their reflection.

Be sure to provide time to discuss responses to “How will our fast today help the poor and hungry in our world?”

# Reflection: How will our fast help the poor and hungry?

## Handout

# FACE THE FAST

*As we continue our Food Fast, we begin to recognize that fasting is important and can guide us towards a deeper spiritual life. Take a moment to be still and to open your hearts and minds so that we may continue to deepen our relationship with God, with each other and with our global family.*

### Reader 1 A reading from the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 58: 6-11)

This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; Setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke;

Sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; Clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your wound shall quickly be healed; Your vindication shall go before you, and the glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard.

Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer, you shall cry for help, and he will say: Here I am! If you remove from your midst oppression, false accusation and malicious speech;

If you bestow your bread on the hungry and satisfy the afflicted; Then light shall rise for you in the darkness, and the gloom shall become for you like midday;

Then the LORD will guide you always and give you plenty even on the parched land. He will renew your strength, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring whose water never fails.

**Consider your decision to participate in this Food Fast and how Isaiah encourages us to fast. Why are you here today?**

### Reader 2 A reading from Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate* #27

Life in many poor countries is still extremely insecure as a consequence of food shortages, and the situation could become worse: *hunger* still reaps enormous numbers of victims among those who, like Lazarus, are not permitted to take their place at the rich man's table, contrary to the hopes expressed by Paul VI. *Feed the hungry* is an ethical imperative for the universal Church, as she responds to the teachings of her Founder, the Lord Jesus, concerning solidarity and the sharing of goods. Moreover, the elimination of world hunger has also, in the global era, become a requirement for safeguarding the peace and stability of the planet. Hunger is not so much dependent on lack of material things as on shortage of social resources, the most important of which are institutional...The right to food, like the right to water, has an important place within the pursuit of other rights, beginning with the fundamental right to life. It is therefore necessary to cultivate a public conscience that considers *food and access to water as universal rights of all human beings, without distinction or discrimination*

**What is Pope Benedict asking us to do? Who are you fasting for today?**

## **Reflection: How will our fast help the poor and hungry?**

### **Handout**

FACE THE FAST

#### **Reader 3 A reading from the U.S. Bishops' statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good* #15**

Each of us should carefully consider our choices and lifestyles. We live in a culture that prizes the consumption of material goods. While the poor often have too little, many of us can be easily caught up in a frenzy of wanting more and more—a bigger home, a larger car, etc. Even though energy resources literally fuel our economy and provide a good quality of life, we need to ask about ways we can conserve energy, prevent pollution, and live more simply.

#### **How do our decisions and choices affect our brothers and sisters around the world? What are you fasting from today?**

#### **Reader 4 A reading from the U.S. Bishops' statement, *Called to Global Solidarity***

Solidarity is action on behalf of the one human family, calling us to help overcome the divisions in our world. Solidarity binds the rich to the poor. It makes the free zealous for the cause of the oppressed. It drives the comfortable and secure to take risks for the victims of tyranny and war. It calls those who are strong to care for those who are weak and vulnerable across the spectrum of human life. It opens homes and hearts to those in flight from terror and to migrants whose daily toil supports affluent lifestyles. Peacemaking, as Pope John Paul II has told us, is the work of solidarity.

#### **How does this Food Fast join us in solidarity with our global family? How will our fast today help the poor and hungry in our world?**

*Throughout our Food Fast, consider your answers to these questions. If you begin to struggle with your fasting, return to your thoughts, answers and feelings and know that God is accompanying you on this journey.*