

HELPING HAND 2021 - FEEDING HOPE: ALL GENERATIONS SUPPORTING ALL GENERATIONS

MEN'S MINISTRY GUIDE

PREPARATION

- Read through this guide
- Look at some pictures of Zimbabwe (use your phone or computer, or look in books at the library)
- Read the Farmers' Stories found on our website
- Download the Feeding Hope comic found on our website

BIBLE REFERENCES

- Mark 4:1-20 – The Parable of the Sower
- Philippians 4:19
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

INTRODUCTION

You can use this to create your own customised introduction for your Men's Ministry session.

This session will enable your Men's Ministry congregation or individual families to explore some of the challenges faced by farmers and their families in Zimbabwe. In reading the Farmers' Stories, you will discover the virtuous relationship between people and environment. The supporting resources will also reveal how The Salvation Army is helping to improve outcomes for families and communities, and what we might understand about God's character in creation from the Bible. Read through the stories in the resource so that you are familiar with the situations faced by the families in Zimbabwe.

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

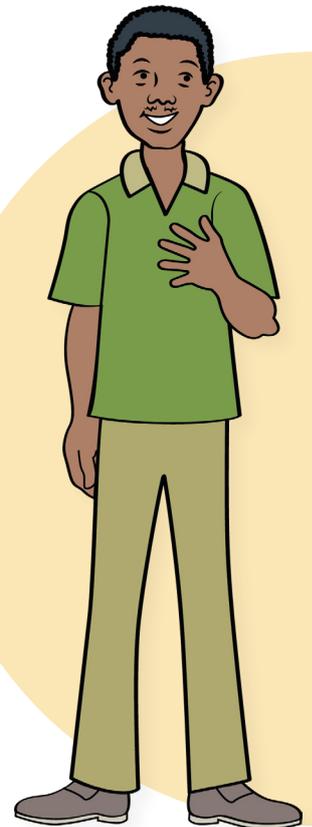
Food security, as defined by the United Nations' Committee on World Food Security, means that all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Through its food security programmes around the world, The Salvation Army provides training and confidence building so that individual families from one generation to another can thrive, whole communities can benefit, and The Salvation Army can grow through the planting of new corps. As you read the stories provided, you will see how this 'virtuous relationship' between people, environment and The Salvation Army works.

The title 'Feeding Hope' refers to two things:

1. When a farm's crop increases, the farmer and his/her family can have the confidence to know that the future they hope for is secure. The family will have enough food for themselves and enough to sell for an income. This means their children can be assured of an education and access to healthcare.
2. Families work the land together, and when the children can see their parents succeeding it gives them hope in choosing to support the family farm – all generations supporting all generations.



INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

Consequences game

Players: Two or more
The players take turns in contributing sentences to a story.

Description

Each player starts with a piece of paper. The players each write a phrase as the first step in a story, and then folds the paper to hide the phrase before passing it to the next player.

The steps are as follows:

- i) Name of a person
- ii) Type of car they bought
- iii) What they found in the glove compartment
- iv) What they did with it
- v) What was the outcome
- vi) What they're doing now
- vii) What happened to the car
- viii) What were the consequences

When the players have completed all eight steps, the pieces of paper are unfolded in turn, and the players read out the completed, usually funny, stories.

Decisions we make (or others make for us) have consequences in the future. Watch *THE CHOICE* (Short Animated Movie) on YouTube.

TABLE TALK

Discuss the film and the choices you have made during your life and the impact they had on your immediate or long-term future (if known).

Read the five stories provided and reflect on their limited choices. Discuss how The Salvation Army Food Security programmes have given meaningful choices to those who had very few options and how making the choice to 'go for it' has impacted their immediate and long-term future. (Gudu Shembele's story could be highlighted.)

BIBLE THOUGHT - HEBREWS 11:1, PHILIPPIANS 4:19

A number of years ago now, an experiment was conducted at the University of California at Berkeley involving rats. The rats were put into in a tub of water, where they literally had to swim for their lives. Of course they couldn't keep it up for ever, and eventually they grew exhausted and drowned.

From the first experiment, the researchers concluded that on average, rats were capable of swimming for over seven hours before drowning.

A second experiment was conducted, similar to the first, but with one difference. When a rat was getting too exhausted to swim any longer, the researchers would lift the rat from the tub of water for a few seconds, then put the rat back into the water to continue swimming. These rats were able to swim for almost 20 hours before meeting a watery end!

The researchers believed that the rats in the second group were able to swim much longer than the first group not because they rested – it was an insignificant time – but because they had hope. They had experienced a rescue, and what kept them going was the hope that they would be rescued again.

We are no different. Without hope, we drown. But with hope, we have a reason to live. Hope is what keeps us going. It has been said that 'as oxygen is to the lungs, so hope is to the human heart'.

When the farmers in Zimbabwe who were struggling to survive with failing farms made the choice to sign up to a Salvation Army Food Security programme, they were literally offered a lifeline which transformed their lives in two ways particularly.

The new methods of farming meant that there was enough food to eat and to sell ensuring an income so that they could pay the fees for their children to attend school. Secondly, the children were more likely to see a future for themselves if they chose to continue to work on the family farm. There was sense of hope for the future.

We generally use the word hope in three different ways...

1. *Hope is the desire for something good to happen in the future.*
We might say, 'I hope my football team wins the match on Saturday.'
2. *Hope is the good thing in the future that we are desiring.*
We say our hope is that our team will win the cup. In other words, the cup is the object of our hope.
3. *Hope is the reason why our hope might be realised.*
We say, 'If our captain is fit to play on Saturday, we have a hope of winning.' In other words, the captain being able to play in the match is the reason we may, in fact, achieve the future goal (if you excuse the pun). He's our only hope!

So, we use hope in three senses...

1. A desire for something good to happen in the future.
2. The thing in the future that we desire.
3. The basis or reason for thinking that our desire might come to fruition.

Usually when we are expressing hope we are also expressing uncertainty. This is not the biblical concept of hope.

'Hope' is commonly used to mean a wish: its strength is the strength of the person's desire. But in the Bible 'hope' is the confident expectation of what God has promised and its strength is in his faithfulness. *(from Hope Christian Community)*

That sounds like an expression of faith, doesn't it. And so it is! It therefore raises the question: what is the difference between faith and the biblical concept of hope? Indeed, is there any difference?

It seems that faith is the big picture and hope is an essential element of that picture. We see this in Hebrews 11:1 – perhaps the closest thing we have to a definition of faith in Scripture: *'Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen'* (NRSV).

Faith is our confidence in the word of God, and whenever his word refers to the future, we can call our confidence in it 'hope'. Hope is faith in the future tense.

BIBLE THOUGHT (CONTINUED)

Philippians 4:19 is a statement of our Christian hope. *The New Living Translation* puts it this way:

'And this same God who takes care of me will supply all your needs from his glorious riches, which have been given to us in Christ Jesus.'

We may not have to face the same challenges as our friends in Zimbabwe, but for all of us the future is unknown and can at times look scary. God has given us an eternal hope through the work of his Son. The truth is that this amazing God will take care of every need we have either for today... or for tomorrow... or, for that matter, eternity.

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

'It takes 24 months (2 years) for a family attending a salvation army project to really begin to thrive...'

1. **Run/cycle/walk/swim 24 miles**, one mile for each month it takes for a family to thrive. Get people to sponsor you per mile.
2. **Relay** – Alternatively the 24 miles could be done as a relay. Again, get people to sponsor you as a team or individually.
3. **Silent auction** – you could choose 24 donated items to sell.
4. **Quiz night** – use either online 'family' teams or a family-friendly venue. If you feel able, ask a local restaurant or family pub to host a quiz night for you. You could introduce the evening with some facts about Helping-Hand 2021 'Feeding Hope' and or play the video. Some questions based on this information (or on Zimbabwe) could be included in the quiz questions.
5. **Movie Night** – Ask volunteers to host a movie night. They could invite friends and/or family and suggest a donation to the Helping-Hand project. Share the Helping-Hand info/materials and play the video. (In view of the table talk discussion around choices and their impact on the future, consider showing one of the films mentioned... Groundhog Day, Sliding Doors, About Time.)
6. **Harvesting the crop** – A prize goes to the person who can grow the tallest sunflower / the heaviest marrow (or similar). Ask for a donation to join the competition. Participants could also get people to sponsor them so much per inch or pound/kilogram.
7. **Give it up to save it up** – Give up something for 24 days (again with reference to the time it takes for a family on the SA projects in Zimbabwe to go from surviving to thriving) and put the money you save in a plant pot and watch the Helping-Hand fund grow.

BIBLE THOUGHT (CONTINUED)

'There is a hope' – Stuart Townend and Mark Edwards
Salvation Army Song Book 550
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qyMWBx6vvJo>

Here is a link to the story behind the song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sGDrEg8pcJ4>

PRAYER OF HOPE

Holy God, our only hope is in you.
We thank you for the past, trust you for today
and believe for the future; that all your promises
will come to pass so we can rest forever in your
love. Amen

Jane Holloway, World Prayer Centre