

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

MIDWEEK SESSION 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
- Map of Zimbabwe and information about the country (**Appendix 1**)
- Resources from our website including case stories, PowerPoint presentation and Prayer Diary
- Links on a laptop to Zimbabwean food

INTRODUCTION

You can use this to create your own customised introduction for your Midweek session.

This session will enable your Midweek group 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 crops. 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.



ACTIVITIES/DISCUSSIONS

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FOOD SECURITY

What do these words mean to you? Remember your first experiences of lockdown – stockpiling and shortages, queues, many turning to 'grow your own', or receiving food parcels. But what about those who rely on growing crops for their livelihood and experiencing drought or storms that put everything in jeopardy?

BIBLE READING

Read: Mark 4:1-20 'The Parable of the Sower' *NIV*

Discuss: Does this reflect your experience of gardening? How do you know what the best techniques are to enable things to grow? How has advice and guidance from others proved helpful, including TV gardeners?

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT ZIMBABWE?

Provide travel books, or print off information to share from the internet, or create a quiz by finding information on Zimbabwe on the internet. Or you can read this excerpt from the Lonely Planet guide and ask how it matches up with the group's ideas of Zimbabwe.

'A journey to Zimbabwe will take you through an attractive patchwork of landscapes, from highveld, balancing boulders and flaming msasa trees, to laidback towns, lush mountains and lifeblood rivers. Here you can spot the Big Five (leopard, lion, rhino, elephant and buffalo) in its national parks, discover World Heritage-listed archaeological sites and stand in awe of one of the natural wonders of the world, Victoria Falls.' (Lonely Planet guide)

Hopefully some of the following will be mentioned:

Cecil Rhodes (Rhodesia), Harare, food, life expectancy lowest in the world, literacy high, Victoria Falls...

Tourists might have a different experience from the people who live there. Where do they turn for advice where surviving feels very far removed from thriving?

Among the most serious of Zimbabwe's environmental problems is erosion of its agricultural lands and expansion of the desert. Air and water pollution result from the combined effects of transportation vehicles, mining, use of fertilisers and the cement industry. The Covid-19 crisis has been disastrous particularly for the poor communities who rely on roadside sales and small markets for their produce.

LOOK AT TYPICAL ZIMBABWEAN FOODS

Sadza is the staple in Zimbabwe and can be eaten at every meal. It is made from maize flour (cornmeal) and can be simple like porridge at breakfast and more solid when served with meat or vegetables for lunch and in the evening.

Peanuts, avocados, butternut squash, cucumbers and beans are some of the vegetables.

Or how about dried flying ants? Quite tasty.

If possible, find a recipe for some sweet buns or bread to share; or if there is someone local who can provide or share some typical food, invite them to do so.



WHAT IS THE SALVATION ARMY'S 'FOOD SECURITY' PROGRAMME DOING IN ZIMBABWE?

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 benefit, and The Salvation Army grows through the planting of new corps.

Our focus for the 2021 campaign is The Salvation Army's Food Security programmes in Zimbabwe. The Salvation Army is at work in many countries to support families as they work not only to live, but to thrive. The truth is, that in an environment where hard manual work produces very little yield, livelihoods and lives are at risk. Helping whole families move from surviving to thriving takes time, care and investment in training. When families thrive, several benefits can be seen.

In Zimbabwe the soil is referred to as 'God's blanket' covering the Earth and enabling it to remain fertile. Training empowers farmers to boldly embrace new farming practices which protect 'God's blanket' and reduce erosion.

In rural Zimbabwe, there is a group of farmers. The plots of land that each farmer owns have been in the individual families for many generations and they have learnt the traditional methods of planting and harvesting maize from their mothers/fathers who were farmers before them. In recent years they have seen how even their most successful harvests are less than what they were able to grow before. The soil in their land is depleted of nutrients and the irregular rains make it almost impossible to judge when it is the best time to sow their seeds. They can no longer afford to purchase the expensive fertiliser which their soil has become dependent on for any crop production.

LET US HEAR THEIR STORIES

Using the case stories, ask members to share the farmers' stories:



Share your impressions with your neighbour and consider how you might support the project.

All these people have known difficulties in day-to-day survival, but each has expressed their hopes for the future having listened and put into practice what they have been shown. A Zimbabwean proverb states, 'You cannot tell a hungry child that you gave him food yesterday.' This is the practical aspect of the programme as food is grown not only to feed the family but also as a means of earning some money for their future development. Not only has this been food security, but there has also been a spiritual food bank provided which is bearing fruit as many have come to know the Lord.

BENEDICTION

Philippians 4:19 (NIV): 'And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.'

SUGGESTED SONGS

SASB 53 (TB 759) 'Praise and thanksgiving, Father, we offer'

SASB 54 (TB 509) 'Praise for the harvest of orchard and field'

SASB 66 (TB 167) 'This is my Father's world'

SASB 68 (TB 443 or 449) 'To thee, O Lord of earth and sky'



MAP OF ZIMBABWE



The Limpopo and Zambezi rivers outline the border of Zimbabwe and supply the soil with moisture and nutrients needed to grow crops. These crops, such as squash, corn, yams, pumpkins, peanuts and *mapopo* (papaya) flourish during the summer and autumn months, but can be destroyed in the dry winter months. To preserve food for consumption during the winter months, Zimbabweans dry various produce and meats after the rainy season. Tiny dried fish called *kapenta* are a common snack. Another dried specialty is *biltong*, which is sun-dried, salted meat cut into strips similar to beef jerky.