



Living Simply

Focusing on Justice and Service – Te Tika me te Whakāpa Tangata

HOLY CROSS
SEMINARY



SONG: Your Grace is Enough

Matt Maher

Great is Your faithfulness oh God
You wrestle with the sinner's restless heart
You lead us by still waters into mercy
And nothing can keep us apart

Pre Chorus:

So remember Your people
Remember Your children
Remember Your promise, oh God

Chorus:

Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough
Your grace is enough for me

Great is Your love and justice God of Jacob.
You use the weak to lead the strong
You lead us in the song of Your salvation
And all Your people sing along

Pre Chorus:

So remember Your people.
Remember Your children.
Remember Your promise, oh
God.

Chorus x3

Chorus 2:

Your Grace is enough
Heaven reaching down to us
Your Grace is enough for me

God, I see Your grace is enough
I'm covered in Your love
Your grace is enough for me

PRAYER

Compassionate and loving God,
you created the world for us all to share,
a world of beauty and plenty.
Create in us a desire to live simply,
so that our lives may reflect your generosity.

Creator God,

You gave us responsibility for the earth,
a world of riches and delight.
Create in us a desire to live sustainably,
so that those who follow after us
may enjoy the fruits of your creation.

God of peace and justice,

You give us the capacity to change,
to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom.
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity,
so that the pillars of injustice crumble
and those now crushed are set free.
Amen.

Source: Linda Jones / CAFOD

PRAYER FOCUS:

Before starting the meeting set up a prayer focus with a range of items that a typical person in your group might have (or have provided to them) eg:

- warm clothing and shoes
- a symbol of housing eg a miniature house/picture
- an item of furniture eg a chair
- water (or a tap)
- a symbol of education eg a book
- some money eg a \$20 note
- an item of food eg a loaf of bread or a pizza box
- a symbol of employment (eg a business card)
- electronic gadgets eg mobile phone or laptop
- bible (open to Ecclesiastes 2:11 for Activity 2)



Game

Announce, 'You've been selected to join a seven day *Survive a Slum* experience. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book (which is not the Bible) and one luxury item

What would you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for participants to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group.

As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too.

GROUP ACTIVITY 1: Feeding a Family Game

(adapted from Make Hunger History - <http://www.bread.org/hunger-no-more/children-and-youth.html>)

In this activity, you will create four groups and give each group a paper describing its family and income. Refer to Attachment 1 for the four handouts.

Each group will attempt to plan a nutritious menu for one day based on the money it has available.

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.

Read Matthew 14:14-21 to the group. Ask, "Why do you think Jesus wanted food for the people?" After the group have talked about this question, encourage them to think about what God wants for all people.

Discuss ways the group can work to help hungry people.

GROUP ACTIVITY 2: Reflecting on what living simply really means

Gather the group around the prayer focus. Have a bible open at Ecclesiastes 2:11. Invite a participant to read this scripture passage. Give a couple of minutes silence for people to reflect and then initiate a discussion about how we are always wanting more (refer leader notes in Attachment 2).

Invite participants to look at the items on the prayer focus and to think about how much importance they place on each item in their own life. Allow 5-10 minutes for quiet reflection (and maybe have some reflective music playing in the background).

Now cover the prayer focus with a second cloth. Ask the participants to make a list of the items that they remember from the prayer focus in the order of priority for their life. What do they remember first? Which items are most important to them? How important would God say these items are? If they had to live without half these items, which items would they relinquish?

Divide participants into groups. Each group should take one of the Living Simply Challenges to reflect on. Each group should then come up with a creative response to share with the rest of the group. The creative response can take any form that participants in your group would enjoy eg dramatic interpretation, writing a song or poetry, creating a collage of pictures or making a symbol from clay.

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.)

<p>Breakfast for three people Cereal and fruit: \$2 Frozen waffles and fruit: \$3 Toast: \$1</p>	<p>Dinner for three people Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$5 Hot dogs and soup: \$4 Dinner at a pizza place: \$15</p>
<p>Lunch for three people Cheese sandwiches: \$2 Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$4 Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$2</p>	<p>Snacks for three people Ice cream: \$4 Fruit: \$2 Cheese and crackers: \$2</p>

How much will your menu cost per day _____.

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.)

<p>Breakfast for five people Cereal and fruit: \$4 Frozen waffles and fruit: \$5 Toast: \$2</p>	<p>Dinner for five people Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$8 Hot dogs and soup: \$6 Dinner at a pizza place: \$20</p>
<p>Lunch for five people Cheese sandwiches: \$4 Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$6 Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$4</p>	<p>Snacks for five people Ice cream: \$6 Fruit: \$3 Cheese and crackers: \$4</p>

How much will your menu cost per day _____.

Family 3: There are five 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.)

<p>Breakfast for four people Cereal and fruit: \$3 Frozen waffles and fruit: \$4 Toast: \$2</p>	<p>Dinner for four people Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$7 Hot dogs and soup: \$5 Dinner at a pizza place: \$18</p>
<p>Lunch for four people Cheese sandwiches: \$3 Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$5 Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$3</p>	<p>Snacks for four people Ice cream: \$5 Fruit: \$2 Cheese and crackers: \$3</p>

How much will your menu cost per day _____.

Family 4: There are five 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.)

<p>Breakfast for four people Cereal and fruit: \$3 Frozen waffles and fruit: \$4 Toast: \$2</p>	<p>Dinner for four people Spaghetti, salad and bread: \$7 Hot dogs and soup: \$5 Dinner at a pizza place: \$18</p>
<p>Lunch for four people Cheese sandwiches: \$3 Ham sandwiches, apples and cookies: \$5 Peanut butter & jelly sandwiches and carrots: \$2</p>	<p>Snacks for four people Ice cream: \$5 Fruit: \$2 Cheese and crackers: \$3</p>

How much will your menu cost per day _____.

Attachment 2 | Leader Notes for Activity 2 - **Are you always wanting more?**

Whether it's money, friends, Facebook likes or Twitter followers, more is always celebrated. It's in our nature to live a life of accumulation. We gather and gather in order to keep it all (whatever it is) for ourselves, and do with it what we see fit.

What is enough for you? How much money is enough money? It's very, very difficult to put a solid answer to those questions. And that's the problem with an accumulation life style (always striving for something more) – we never know when we're done.

Life is not about getting more material items or having a large bank account.

Take an inventory of all that you have: somewhere nice to live, running water, a bed, furniture, car, shoes, mobile phone, laptops/iPad... everything you have. Take a second to think and meditate on what life would be like without those things you already have.

The simple life: The goal is not to live poorly, but to live richly in the things that really matter.

Smart phones are common in our increasingly complex and frantic world. We're multi-tasking with phone calls, emails, faxes, and receiving directions to our next meeting with the GPS function. Our digital to-do list dictates our day while the electronic planner reminds us what to do next.

The “simple life” is a manner of living that is outwardly simpler and inwardly richer.

And so simple living is a growing trend for many people as they move from a workaholic, materialistic lifestyle to a simpler lifestyle. They “downsize” their homes, drive smaller fuel-efficient vehicles, take up “low-tech” hobbies such as gardening, quilting and scrap booking, and turn off cell phones and computers when they arrive home to enjoy “family time”.

The writer of Ecclesiastes lamented, after accumulating massive wealth and luxurious properties, “When I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

LIVING SIMPLY CHALLENGE: Simplicity | A deeper motivation

Scripture: “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 12:2-3*

To get you thinking: In his popular book, *Freedom of Simplicity*, Christian author Richard Foster writes, “Simplicity is the only thing that can sufficiently reorient our lives so that possessions can be genuinely enjoyed without destroying us.”

Today people choose simple living for a variety of reasons such as health, an increase in family time, stress reduction, care for the planet, social justice and anti-consumerism. We as Christians should take on a lifestyle of wilful poverty so that we can more fully focus on God, our brothers and sisters, and a needy world.

Your response: Christ calls for simplicity. How can people your age live a simpler life? How can you influence family and friends to live a simpler life?

LIVING SIMPLY CHALLENGE: Compassion | Are we living the way scripture calls us to live?

Scripture: “And the King will say, ‘I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!’” (Matthew 25:37-40).

To get you thinking: Jesus warns us that we will be judged by our compassion. “Then these righteous ones will reply, ‘Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ Hunger relief groups estimate that it would take 13 billion dollars a year to end hunger for the Earth’s poorest citizens. However, North Americans and Europeans spend 18 billion dollars a year on pet food.

Your response: The problem can be solved by simply reducing our spending with a simple lifestyle—motivated by compassion for the least of these. How can we achieve this in our own lives?

LIVING SIMPLY CHALLENGE: Justice | How are others treated?

Scripture:

The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. Psalm 33:5.
The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. Psalm 103:6.

To get you thinking: The United Nations Human Development Report of 1992 records, “In a world of 5 billion people, we discovered that the top billion people, hold 83% of the world’s wealth, while the bottom billion have only 1.4 %.” Living simply, then, becomes a justice issue. It is living out the “golden rule” of treating others the way we would want ourselves and our loved ones treated.

Your response: What is one justice issue you see in Aotearoa New Zealand? How could you (or your group) make a positive change to this issue?

LIVING SIMPLY CHALLENGE: Contentment | Focusing on what really matters

Scripture: The apostle Paul says in his letter to the Philippians, “For I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.” (Philippians 4:11-13).

To get you thinking: Simplicity enhances personal freedom and fulfilment while promoting a just manner of living relative to the needs of the world. The goal is not to live poorly, but to live richly in the things that really matter: time with God and family and generous giving to the needs of others.

Your response: What examples of living richly in the things that really matter can you identify that would be relevant to people your age?