**World Hunger Simulation**

This activity is written to introduce a group of 20 to 30 grade school students to issues of hunger and inequitable distribution of food and resources in the world. This activity was developed by the World Food Prize Foundation and inspired by the Oxfam America Hunger Banquet ([www.oxfamamerica.org](http://www.oxfamamerica.org)) and Facing the Future’s “Let them Eat Cake” lesson plan ([www.facingthefuture.org](http://www.facingthefuture.org)).

For more information about the World Food Prize, please visit [www.worldfoodprize.org](http://www.worldfoodprize.org) or contact us at 515-245-3783 or [wfpf@worldfoodprize.org](mailto:wfpf@worldfoodprize.org).

Materials:

Activity Tickets - 30

Giant Rice Krispy Treat - 1

Knife - 1

Plates – 5 (one for each region)

Napkins – 30 (one for each student)

Hand Sanitizer - 1

Paper – 30 (enough for each student)

Colors (markers, crayons, pencils, etc) – 30 (enough for each student)

Set-Up:

*Note:* Explain to the teacher off to the side the idea of the social experiment so they are not reprimanding the kids for not sharing.

Set out different colored sheets or otherwise mark different areas of the floor for each region to sit.

On their way into the room, kids pull a ticket out of a hat to be assigned to their geographical region.

Have the Rice Krispy treat pre-cut and set out of view off to the side.

Proportions

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| Region | Rice Krispy Proportion | Population Proportion | Out of 30 | Out of 25 | Out of 20 |
| Asia | 1/3 | 61% | 17 | 15 | 12 |
| Europe | 1/4 | 12% | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| North America | 1/4 | 5% | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Africa | 1/6 | 13% | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Latin America | 1/6 | 9% | 3 | 2 | 2 |

Introduction and Questions:

*Note*: If applicable, introduce yourself first (example: “My name is Stephen Lauer and I work at the World Food Prize in Iowa. We’re an organization that encourages people to end hunger.”)

1. Do you think that hunger is a big problem today?

2. Can anyone guess how often someone in this world dies of hunger? (Every how many seconds?)

*Answer:* one person dies of hunger every three to five seconds

3. Do you think kids in Iowa worry about not always having enough to eat?

4. Can anyone guess how many children in Iowa struggle with hunger? (One in two? One in ten?)

*Answer:* In Iowa one in five children struggles with hunger and doesn’t always know where their next meal is coming from. (Have 5 kids stand up to physically represent the number for the kids)

Simulation:

Here we have a Rice Krispy treat that represents all of the food that’s available in the world. You represent all of the people alive in different regions of the planet.

I’m going to divide the Rice Krispy treat between the different regions. But first - how do you think I should divide it?

Now I’m going to divide the treat up, based on the amount of food actually available to people in each region. Please don’t start eating the treat yet – we have another decision to make before we eat.

*Note*: Hold each piece of Rice Krispy treat up before distributing it to each continent. As you distribute again draw their attention to how many people there are and the percentage of food they get.

Now each group has a couple minutes to decide what you want to do with your piece of Rice Krispy treat. You may go ahead and cut it into pieces if you would like, but please don’t start eating it until everyone has a chance to learn what you plan to do with the treat.

Okay, let’s find out what each group has decided to do. I’d like one person from each group to tell us your decision and show us how big of a piece you will be eating.

*Note*: Make sure everyone in the room is able to see the different sizes of the pieces.

Okay, you can go ahead and eat now.

*Note:* Allow five to seven minutes for eating, or until kids seem to be finishing up.

Reflection Questions

1. Now that we’ve finished the simulation, what do you think?

2. What do you notice about how the food is distributed? Do you think this is fair?

3. How are resources distributed in the United States? Does everyone in the Iowa make the same amount of money?

*Note*: If they are not able to give examples of resource distribution, ask them about – houses, education, where people buy clothes, where they live, and what their families’ drive, where they get their food – the grocery store, the food bank, the church…

4. Do you think that we should care that so many people are hungry?

5. How do you feel when you’re hungry? (tired, anxious, upset, angry)

6. How do you think you would feel if you weren’t able to eat for a day, two days, a week? How many of you have younger sisters or brothers? How would you feel if your entire family couldn’t eat for a week?

7. What do you think we should do to help people who are hungry here in Iowa or around the world?

8. Does anyone here help fight hunger? How?

*Note*: If they are not able to give examples, ask if they have ever donated food to a food pantry or served a meal to the homeless through their church.

9. How else do you think we can fight against hunger?

(Examples: donate food, donate money, gardening, education, helping people find jobs, writing to members of our government, etc)

Now everyone has an opportunity to make a poster showing how you are going to make the world a better place – personally or with your families. We’ll take pictures and put them up on Facebook.

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| **North America**  **My name is John.**  My grandparents emigrated from Italy and raised my mother in a tenement in Chicago. She worked her way through college and law school, taking on a variety of odd jobs, and then started her own law practice. She is able to provide a nice home for us to live in, and she has also been able to “give back” by paying for college for high school graduates with exceptional promise who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. | **Europe**  **My name is Jean.**  I am from Paris. Growing up in a poor part of town, my family worked hard to make ends meet. Thankfully, we almost always had enough to eat. I studied hard and was given a scholarship to study agricultural science at a leading university. I want to use my degree to grow healthier plants so that everyone around the world has enough to eat. |
| **North America**  **My name is Shang.**  I am a 15-year-old Chinese woman living in the United States. Ever since I was a young girl I have always wanted to come to America where there is political freedom and economic opportunity. In China I was fortunate enough to learn English fairly well, and when my family came to the United States I went straight into high school. In my spare time I volunteer with a nonprofit organization that helps Chinese immigrants get settled here. | **Europe**  **My name is Catherine.**  I live with my family on a farm in Piedmont, Italy. We raise vegetables to sell at our local farmers market. This farm has been in our family for over 200 years, and we are very proud to grow healthy food for our friends and neighbors. We make sure to donate any leftover vegetables to distribute to people in need. |

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| **Europe**  **My name is Olga.**  I live in Germany. My mother is a scientist at a chemical company, where she researches new ways to store food so that it doesn’t rot on its way to the store. I want to be a scientist when I finish school, but I’m more interested in water and how to make sure that we keep it clean from pollution. | **Europe**  **My name is Jean.**  I am from Paris. Growing up in a poor part of town, my family worked hard to make ends meet. Thankfully, we almost always had enough to eat. I studied hard and was given a scholarship to study agricultural science at a leading university. I want to use my degree to grow healthier plants so that everyone around the world has enough to eat. |
| **Latin America**  **My name is Lourdes.**  I live in Brazil in a town just outside of Sao Paulo and I have five brothers and sisters. My mom took a job in a clothing factory where she works long hours. She makes just enough money to feed my brothers and me, but I don't get to spend as much time with her as I would like. | **Latin America**  **I am Julia.** My parents are small farmers in El Salvador. For many years we grew coffee and sold it to a wealthy middleman who paid us low prices and then sold it for a handsome profit. Recently my parents joined a cooperative. The cooperative buys our beans at fair prices, processes them and sells them to buyers in the United States and Europe. By working together, we are not being exploited and we are doing much better. |

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| **Latin America**  **I am Jorge.**  I come from the highlands of Guatemala where there is still a lot of violence even though the civil war has officially ended. When the military suspected that communists lived in my village, they burned many homes, including my family’s. We fled to the city, but living conditions there were terrible. We slept in huts made of cardboard and rusted car doors or anything we could find. A few years ago, six of our neighbors and my parents received a loan to start a small carpentry workshop, which has been very successful. Life is much better for us now. | **Africa**  **I am Bareded Bekele.**  I am a farmer and I live in southern Ethiopia with my family. We never had an ox until my father received a loan of 330 birr ($160) from a local charity. Before, it took 7-8 days to prepare our land for planting using hand tools. Now, when we team up with a neighbor who also has an ox, we can cultivate the same amount of land in 4-5 hours. This year my father will plant more land; and I expect that we will grow enough food to feed our family and have a surplus so he can pay the first installment on my loan. |
| **Africa**  **I am Anna Pedro.**  I live in Mozambique. My village has suffered from both man-made and natural disasters: the recently ended civil war in my country and a cholera epidemic that has killed many people. Together with our neighbors, my family is dealing with the cholera problem by building a fence around a new well drilled by the new Mozambican provincial water service. | **Africa**  **My name is Claude.**  I live in Botswana, Africa. My father has a job heading the Ministry of Finance. For a few years, he worked at the World Bank in Washington, DC, but before I was born, he came back home to put his skills to use to improve my country’s economy. He doesn’t make as much as he did in the United States, but compared to many of my friends, my family leads a very good and prosperous life. |

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| **Africa**  **I am Maria.**  I live in Zimbabwe, where it is very arid. I can remember many years when the rains did not come and our crops withered and died. Recently, a local group received a grant to build a dam on the river so we will have clean water year-round. I look forward to the day when I can have confidence that our crops will grow and my family will eat well. | **Asia**  **My name is Ismatullah.**  I am 16-years old and work as a shopkeeper in the village of Qadis in Afghanistan. Prospects for my three-month old kiosk doesn't look good. Of the 300 shops that used to be open in the town, only twenty are still in business. It is hard to see how I’m going to sell the packs of pasta and bars of Raana soap. |
| **Asia**  **I am Ravi.**  I belong to an indigenous group in Gujarat, in western India. Like most people in this area, my parents work for the government. We are guaranteed protected status by the government but the reality is that these laws are not being enforced and discrimination is rampant. Last year, we attended a rally to press the government for higher wages and benefits. We were successful and my parents’ wages were doubled. | **Asia**  **My name is Lawrence.**  I live in Hong Kong in a public housing project with my parents and eight brothers and sisters. We live in a 12’ X 12’ room, and we have a refrigerator and a hot plate on a small adjoining balcony. I am very fortunate to have received a scholarship to study law. I look forward to the day when I am earning a good salary and can move into an apartment of my own. |

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| **Asia**  **I am Simcha.**  My mother owns her own postcard business, selling to tourists who come to see the ancient city of Jerusalem. She stands on the sidewalk and sells her cards from 9 a.m. until midnight, when the last sightseers return to their hotels. When the economy in the United States and Europe is weak, tourism declines and she don’t sell as much. My family has had some difficult years, but we have always done well enough to feed ourselves. We are fortunate to own our own business. | **Asia**  **My name is Siu.**  I am 15 years old. I live in Vietnam where my family has been fishermen for many years. We have always worked very hard. We get up before the sun rises, load our small boat and set off as daylight breaks. We are usually able to catch large amounts of fish to sell to villagers at the local fish market. My parents make just enough money to support our family, and I was able to go to elementary school when I was younger. |

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| **Asia**  **My name is Ismatullah.**  I am 16-years old and work as a shopkeeper in the village of Qadis in Afghanistan. Prospects for my three-month old kiosk doesn't look good. Of the 300 shops that used to be open in the town, only twenty are still in business. It is hard to see how I’m going to sell the packs of pasta and bars of Raana soap. | **Asia**  **I am Sana,** a 10-year-old Bangladeshi girl. A few years ago, my mom joined a women’s group. They helped us start small businesses, like rice-husking, brick making, raising dairy cows. They also worked with our community to promote women's rights. Now my siblings and I are much healthier and my father helps my mother out at home. |
| **Asia**  **I am Liang.**  I live in northern Vietnam where the average income in the countryside is less than $200 per year. My family has no land, so my father works as a day laborer and earns a small income. We have barely enough to eat and I am only able to go to school for a couple months of the year. My sister can’t go to school, since my parents need her to help out at home. | **Asia**  **I am Pancho,** a young Filipino fisherman from a long line of fisherman. My family has always made a decent living in the fishing business, but my income has gone down as the fish stock has been overexploited. My family now gets barely enough to eat. |

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| **Asia**  **I am Elizabeth.**  Years ago, my father grew corn, yams and mung beans on our land in the Philippines. I always thought that one day I would do the same. Now our land is a part of a large sugar plantation, and we cut cane for 35 cents a day. I work in the field, but I am very weak because I don’t get enough to eat. My mother is worried for me. | **Asia**  **My name is Farida.**  Our forests in India have nearly disappeared, and our people have become nomadic, wandering the earth in search of water. Our men are always on the lookout for jobs, which are scarce. Sometimes they must travel far to find them. With some help from a charity, we are working to solve this problem by building reservoirs that keep the rain water, so we can stay. We are now growing vegetables. You can't imagine what that means to my family, and to our community. |
| **Asia**  **My name is Lutfar.**  I live on the coast of Bangladesh with my family. We often have floods and sometimes we have hurricanes. One year thousands of people were killed by a tidal wave. After that, my family and our neighbors worked with the government and a charity to build a hurricane shelter. The next time a hurricane hits, we have a safe place to go. For now, we use the hurricane shelter as a school and a community gathering place. | **Asia**  **My name is Fauzia.**  I live in Bangladesh. My mom works very hard in the fields, sometimes for as many as 14 hours a day and then she has to cook dinner for my father and me. She joined a revolving loan group and received a small loan to buy a cow. Now, she has milk for me to drink and is able to sell the rest. It’s only a little, but I am healthier and soon she will be able to take out another loan. |