

Module Four:



A Vicious Cycle: Hunger and AIDS



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Bishop Oscar Romero, the martyred leader of the church in Nicaragua, once commented, “When I feed the poor, they call me a saint. When I question *why* the poor are poor, they call me a communist.”¹

When it comes to both hunger and the worldwide AIDS pandemic, Bishop Romero’s poignant quote couldn’t be more relevant. More and more thinkers and leaders are realizing that two of our world’s greatest crises—hunger and AIDS—combine to form a vicious cycle that tragically cripples millions worldwide (see the **NOW** option in this curriculum for more on this cycle). So in the midst of your 30 Hour Famine experience, we encourage you to think about how you and your students can make a real difference in both hunger and AIDS.

As we suggested at the start of this curriculum, there’s a difference between service and social justice. In the context of hunger and AIDS, service is giving our money, time, and energy to help those affected by one or both of those global crises. Following Bishop Romero’s model, social justice asks *why* hunger and disease are ravaging so many people in the first place.

When it comes to hunger and AIDS, the *why* questions are far from simple.

Why does God allow a disease like AIDS that, at this point, is incurable?

Why do some countries suffer from obesity, others from scarcity, and still others from a mixture of the two?

Why are hunger and disease spread in cultures where women lack economic rights and freedoms so that they—especially young women—are among the hardest hit?

Why do my children have probably 40 adults who would gladly step in to care for them if something happened to my husband and me, while children who become orphans due to hunger or AIDS are often left with no one to raise them—and some end up as child soldiers and child prostitutes?

Why?

Why?

Why?

There is one *why* question that’s especially relevant to you and your students: Given the extent of the hunger and AIDS crises, why are followers of the kingdom so slow to respond? Is it because we’re blind to the needs? Or have we received glimpses of it, but we’re still choosing to look away and go on with life as “normal”? Or rather, is it because we’ve looked at the plight of hunger and AIDS face-to-face, and we’re so overwhelmed—we don’t know where to start?

Whether it’s our ignorance, our denial, or our despair that has paralyzed us, hopefully this module will help you and your students stare into the eyes of desperation around the globe in tandem with the hope of the kingdom. As you understand both the needs and the hope, you’ll be better prepared to join the 30 Hour Famine.

Maybe one day a leader such as Bishop Romero will receive a different response when asking the tough questions about social justice. Instead of being labeled a communist, perhaps asking *why* will mean you’re a Christian.

“Like my mother, I was married when I was 14. My husband was 32...I knew from town gossip that he had been with many young women before he married me. He chose me because I was young—he believed that young girls do not have AIDS. I have also heard that some men think that sex with a virgin removes the virus from them...”

– From an African woman infected with HIV

¹ Tony Campolo, “Reflections on Youth Ministry in a Global Context,” *Starting Right*, edited by Kenda Creasy Dean, Chap Clark, and Dave Rahn (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001), 92.

Family Page **A Vicious Cycle: Hunger and AIDS**

Some of the points we discussed with students in this lesson were:

- Hunger and AIDS are tragically linked together, each making the other problem even more tragic.
- We are paralyzed by our ignorance, our denial, or our despair about hunger and AIDS.
- Jesus invites us to participate in His kingdom work by serving those affected by hunger and/or AIDS.
- We can participate in God's kingdom work through our giving, prayers, and advocacy.

Some questions you might want to discuss as a family include:

- What (if anything) do we hear about AIDS from the news?
- What do you think prevents us from getting involved in helping those affected by hunger and/or AIDS: our ignorance, our denial over the extent of the problem, or our despair given the vastness of the crisis?
- If Jesus were to meet someone infected with HIV, what do you think He'd say to her?
- Do you think Jesus would say something different to someone who contracted it because of his own sexual promiscuity versus a blood transfusion? What things would Jesus say to *both* HIV-positive people, regardless of how they contracted the disease?
- Miroslav Volf is a Yale professor who writes, "When [Martin] Luther described the nature of God's love, he used the metaphor of flowing...What happens to the flow when it reaches us? If the flow were to stop, we would be only receivers, not givers...Indeed, in addition to making us flourish, giving to others is the very purpose for which God gave us the gifts."¹ What do you think Jesus might want our family to do to let the love of God we've received flow out to those affected by hunger or HIV and AIDS?

For more information about how your family can get involved in serving those affected by either hunger or HIV and AIDS, check out www.worldvision.org.

A Scripture passage to read together:

- Have someone read aloud James 2:14-26, which focuses on this theme: "Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (verse 17).
- In light of all we've been learning about those impacted by hunger as well as those impacted by HIV and AIDS, how does this passage influence our response as a family?

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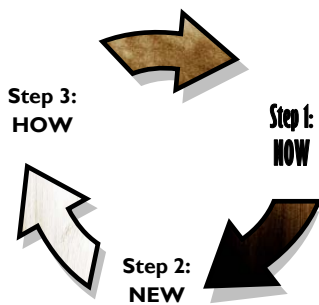
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NOW: What's going on now?

One Minute

Big Idea: We are often paralyzed to respond to hunger and/or AIDS by our ignorance, our denial, or our despair.

You'll need:

- The “Hidden Faces of AIDS Intro” video segment available at www.30hourfamine.org. (Look for the Fuller Curriculum page in the Leaders area.)
- Computer and projector or some other way to show the video
- A clock with a second hand—the bigger the clock, the better
- Poster paper or a whiteboard
- Pens

To begin, greet students and point out the clock.

Q: There's a lot we can get done in one minute. Think about what you've done today. What are some of the things you did that took a minute or less? (Note: if you're meeting in the morning, you might want to include yesterday in your question also.)

Explain: There are also some tragedies that can happen in one minute. Every minute, 12 children die just because of hunger.²

Continue: Unfortunately, when it comes to another problem our world faces, a lot can happen in a minute too. Play the “Hidden Faces of AIDS—Intro Only” video.

Q: According to this video, what happens in a minute due to AIDS? When you saw that in the video, how did you feel?

Q: Not only are five children left as orphans every minute, but also 10 people in Africa are infected with HIV every minute. That means there are twice as many people being infected as those who are dying. What does that mean about the pace of the spread of HIV and AIDS?

If you can pull it off without being too cheesy or annoying, you or another adult leader might periodically point out when it's been three, four, or five minutes throughout the rest of your meeting time. Every time you do that, ask your students: **So how many children have been orphaned in these last minutes because of AIDS? And how many children have died because of hunger?**

Explain: You might be wondering why we're talking about AIDS in the midst of our discussions about poverty and hunger. Tragically, AIDS and hunger are linked together in a vicious cycle. For instance, hunger exacerbates AIDS in many ways. First, adequate nutrition and food bolster the immune system and allow those infected with HIV to continue to live productive

² United Nations World Food Programme, http://www.wfp.org/aboutwfp/facts/hunger_facts.asp.

lives. **Second**, without access to safe and adequate food, people infected with HIV are often less able to take their anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs (food and water help the medicine be absorbed more effectively as well as counter the drugs' side effects) and are thus more likely to die sooner. **Third**, people living with HIV/AIDS who lack sufficient food have less time and energy to focus on their own care as well as on preventing others in their family from contracting the disease. **When faced with hunger**, they are more likely to migrate in search of emergency food relief, thereby furthering the spread of HIV into new communities. **Finally**, there is some evidence that hunger drives women and girls into prostitution, thereby dramatically increasing their exposure to HIV.

Sadly, HIV and AIDS also make hunger and poverty even worse. HIV often afflicts the most productive members of society—those between ages 15 and 45. **When those teenagers and adults get too sick to work or even die**, the agricultural labor force in a region shrinks dramatically. **For instance**, a UNAIDS assessment in Zambia showed that families in which the head of household was chronically ill planted an astonishing 53% less than healthy families.³

Obviously, that means less food immediately for those families, but even more serious is that agricultural techniques and knowledge literally die off as adults die off. **This will likely create even more poverty and hunger in regions affected by HIV and AIDS for decades to come**, which as we've already seen will likely lead to an increase in both hunger and AIDS.

Q: On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being a lot, how much do you think the average American cares about AIDS? How about hunger? What about the average American Christian?

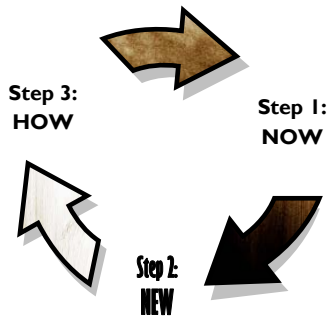
On your whiteboard or poster paper, write **TO CARE OR NOT TO CARE** and then draw a line down the center of the board or paper. Explain: **Let's come up with all the reasons we can think of to care about what happens every minute around the world, as well as reasons not to care.** Divide your group in half and have them stand on either side of the room. Point to the left half and ask them to give a reason to care, which you then write on the left side of the paper or board. Then point to the other side of the room, ask that group to give a reason *not* to care, and write it on the right side. Go back and forth between the left and right sides until your students either run out of ideas or the activity runs out of steam.

Q: Of all of these reasons to care, which three are the most important? How do those reasons reflect what we already know about the kingdom of God?

Q: Of the reasons not to care, which three are the most convincing? During the discussion of this question, try to highlight three common reasons: our ignorance, our denial over the problem, and our despair and hopelessness about what can be done to solve it.

Bring some closure to this **NOW** step before moving on to the **NEW** step by explaining: **We're going to take some time to let you think about your own most important reason to care. Every 10 seconds, I'm going to invite one of you to come forward and put your initials next to the main reason why you think it's important to care about the needs of the world. Just think about how many will have either died because of AIDS or hunger during the time it takes for all of us to write our initials.** If you want, you could even have one of your students track how many minutes it takes your group to write your initials and calculate how many have died because of AIDS and hunger during that time.

³ Ambassador Randall L. Tobias, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., May 11, 2004.



NEW: What's the Kingdom Perspective?

All the Ice Cream in the World

Big Idea: Jesus invites us to participate in kingdom work by serving those affected by hunger and AIDS.

You'll need:

- Ice cream for your students
- Bowls and spoons
- Whiteboard or poster paper
- Pens
- Bibles

Dish out ice cream for your students and let them eat it for a few minutes before you ask any questions. If possible, you might want to distribute ice cream at the very start of your meeting (before the **NOW** step), or as students are entering, if that would flow better.

Q: What's your favorite ice cream flavor?

Q: How often do you eat ice cream? How often would you like to eat it?

Q: How much money do you think is spent on ice cream during an average year in America?

On your whiteboard, record their guesses. Then tell them the answer is actually \$20 billion.⁴ Go ahead and write **\$20 BILLION** on your whiteboard. (Unless you're a math whiz, don't try to guess the number of zeros—just write out the word *billion*.)

Explain: **According to a 2005 report by the United Nations, providing clean water and basic sanitation for the entire world would cost \$7 billion a year for the next 10 years. About \$4 billion a year for the next ten years can finance basic health care that could prevent the deaths of three million infants a year.**⁵ As you're giving these statistics, write them on your whiteboard as well.

Q: How does health care fight against AIDS? What about clean water and basic sanitation? As we pointed out in the previous **NOW** option, clean water, good nutrition, and basic sanitation all help those infected with HIV to be stronger and healthier, thus extending their life spans. Clean water also allows those infected with HIV to take their anti-retroviral medications.

Q: So for \$11 billion, we could provide water, sanitation, and basic health care for the world every year. How does that figure compare with how much America spends on ice cream? How does that make you feel about the ice cream we just ate, and all the ice cream we eat in general?

⁴ State of the World 2004, Worldwatch Institute, <http://www.worldwildlife.org/news/displayPR.cfm?prID=122>

⁵ United Nations Development Program 2005 Human Development Report, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/global/2005/pdf/HDR05_chapter_3.pdf.

Continue: **As followers of God’s kingdom, God invites us to participate in eternal work on earth. Does that mean we should all decide to give up ice cream for the next year? Maybe, maybe not. But in the midst of these types of decisions, Jesus has some interesting words about our motivations. So often we’re motivated to help those affected by hunger or AIDS because either “they have so little” or “we have so much.” While these aren’t terrible motivations, Scripture gives us perhaps a better reason to care.**

Ask for four volunteers to read Matthew 25:31-46 aloud. Ask one to read the words of the King, one to read the words of the “righteous,” one to read the words of the “cursed,” and one to play the part of the narrator and read everything else.

Continue: **In Matthew 24:3, Jesus is asked, “What will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” This passage in Matthew 25:31-46 is part of Jesus’ very long answer to that question.**

In the countryside sheep and goats mingled during the day but were separated from each other at night. Sheep tolerated the cool evening air, but goats needed to be herded together in order to stay warm.

Q: What did the people on Jesus’ right do that made them “blessed”?

Q: Why do those people on the right seem surprised that Jesus said they’d fed and clothed him?

Q: What do we learn about the “least of these” in verses 40 and 45?

Q: So does that mean we’ll only receive eternal life if we take care of the poor? Why or why not? How does that fit with what we know about grace?

Q: In your opinion, why is Jesus represented in the poor? Does this mean Jesus isn’t also represented in the wealthy?

At this point, you might want to turn to Genesis 1:26-27 to read Moses’ account of the way all people are created in God’s image.

Q: Some leaders and writers suggest that even though all are created in God’s image, God favors the poor. Do you think that’s true? Why or why not?

We know from other passages of Scripture that we’re saved by grace through faith, and not our works (Ephesians 2:1-10). Yet our salvation should express itself in our good works. As we experience God’s grace, our entire lives should look like one big “thank-you note” back to God for our salvation and relationship with Him. As James reminds us, our faith without works is dead (James 2:17).

In Reading the Bible from the Margins, Miguel A. De La Torre writes,

I have two children, a ten-year-old boy and a nine-year-old girl. I love both children deeply and would gladly lay down my life for either one of them. Yet...they love to fight...My son is about a foot taller than my daughter...When their fights become physical, my son has the clear advantage. When I see them physically fighting, I step in...and defend my daughter.⁶

⁶ Miguel A. De La Torre, *Reading the Bible from the Margins* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 133.

Q: What are the similarities between Miguel's actions as a father and God's actions as a heavenly Father? What are the differences? Given what Miguel wrote, do you now think God favors the poor? Why or why not?

Help your students see the connection between the ice cream statistics and the Matthew passage: **If we want to see the kingdom furthered by making choices to give money to help curtail the AIDS and hunger crises, that might mean we have less money for things such as ice cream for ourselves. In the midst of making those choices, Jesus reminds us in Matthew 25:40, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers [and sisters] of mine, you did for me."**

At this point, you can either transition to a **HOW** option to conclude the session or you can end the session here by discussing the opportunities to give our money to those affected by hunger as well as by HIV and AIDS through 30 Hour Famine.



Big Idea: We can participate in God's kingdom work in the midst of both poverty and AIDS through our giving, prayers, and advocacy.

You'll need:

- Some sort of way for students to get hands on with water. It can be as simple as having students stick their hands under a running faucet to as elaborate as a full-blown water fight, complete with buckets, water balloons, squirt guns, and lots and lots of towels.
- One water bottle per student
- An additional water bottle that you fill with both water and a bit of dirt ahead of time. The goal is to create water that looks pretty muddy and undesirable.
- A whiteboard or poster paper
- Pens

Allow your students to experience water in the way you have chosen. In the midst of this water experience, try to conserve water as much as possible (i.e., have the end of your running hose water the grass where you're meeting, or place buckets under the running faucet so that you can later use that water to water plants).

Give each student their own water bottle that they can start drinking and then lead the following discussion.

Q: In what ways have you used water in the last few days?

Q: If you had a very limited water supply, what would you miss the most?

Continue: **Most of us rarely think about our proximity to water, but consider this:**

- **Some 1.1 billion people in developing countries have inadequate access to water. That's about one out of six people on the planet.**
- **Close to half of all people in developing countries are suffering from a health problem caused by water and sanitation deficits.⁷**

Continue: **Now let's contrast that with the amount of water we have and use each day. How much water do you think the average person in the world (who does have access to water) uses?** The answer, which you should give them after they've tossed out a few guesses, is about 5 gallons per day. You can illustrate the equivalent of 5 gallons through your water bottles (one gallon is equivalent to 128 ounces, so 5 gallons equals 640 ounces).

Q: Given that, how much water do you think the average person in the United Kingdom uses? After they've shared some guesses, tell them that it's about 42 gallons per day.

Q: How much water do you think the average person in the United States uses? After some guesses, share that the United States represents the highest average water use in the world, at about 150 gallons per day.⁸

Q: How does that statistic about the United States make you feel?

Continue: **I've given each of you a water bottle that most of us could probably get pretty easily for ourselves, but for much of the world is actually a luxury. Let's think about bottled water in light of the example of water in the islands of Fiji. Fiji Water, which is one of the hippest bottled waters in the U.S. market today, is water that lives up to its marketing claim of coming "from the islands of Fiji". But more than half of the people in Fiji do not have safe, reliable drinking water. That means it's probably easier for you to get a drink of pure, refreshing water from Fiji than the majority of people who actually live in Fiji.⁹**

At this point, hold up your water bottle with muddy water and explain: **Today we've looked at the connection between hunger and AIDS. Imagine being sick with a disease like AIDS and this is the water you have to drink. This is the water you need to use to take your medications. This is the water you bathe in.**

Q: Now that we understand the connection between AIDS and poverty, what specifically can we do to be active in the King's work? Students are likely to give answers such as "Pray" or "Give money."

Continue: **Those are good examples, and I want to point you to something bigger: How about if you consider reorienting your life so that what you do and who you are flows out of a commitment to God's work among the poor? I realize that's a big request, but that's what it means to be part of God's kingdom. Each of us needs to prayerfully discern what God's call means for us and then ask God to strengthen us with His grace to live up to that call.**

⁷ 2006 United Nations Human Development Report, pp.6, 7, 35.

⁸ 2006 United Nations Human Development Report, pp.6, 7, 35.

⁹ Charles Fishman, "Zero Calories," *Fast Company*, July/August 2007.

Of course, that type of commitment often fleshes itself out in practical acts of giving, so now would be a good time to talk (either for the first time or again) about any 30 Hour Famine commitments your group would like to make.

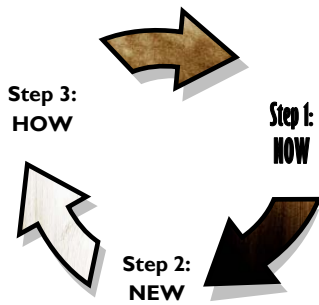
Q: If we look ahead six months, what would we want to be different about us, our relationships, and our youth ministry because we're part of God's kingdom work? If possible, write their ideas on a whiteboard or poster paper. If students' ideas don't seem quite revolutionary enough, encourage them to think even bigger: How can we become advocates in your city for those affected by hunger or AIDS? How can our ministry mobilize more adults in our church to join in 30 Hour Famine? How can our prayers make a tangible difference in the lives of men, women and children affected by hunger and AIDS? What type of financial goal would we like to set that is so big we're forced to rely on God to make it a reality? What are ways this change can extend way beyond 30 Hour Famine to other aspects of the advancement of the kingdom on earth and God's will being done?

Close in prayer, asking God to work through your group to give living water, as well as physical water, to the poor around the world! If it feels appropriate, you might want to offer some time for students to repent of any ways they've not been reflecting God's kingdom in the midst of the hunger and AIDS crises up to this point. If you'd like, you could also repeat the "Your Kingdom Come" exercise based on the Lord's Prayer (from the **HOW** option in Module 1). Encourage your students to translate what they've learned today into new prayers based on Jesus' words in Matthew 6:9-13. It would be interesting and encouraging, both for you and your students, to see how God continues to show you new ways that the kingdom Jesus prays about is becoming more vibrant in your students' prayers and desires.

Optional Closing: At the end of this session (and perhaps after every one), you might consider giving students 8½" x 11" pieces of paper and inviting them to draw, write, or depict what strikes them about being part of the King's response to hunger. You could then collect these every week and keep them in a three-ring binder for the students to peruse throughout the series. Then at the end of your 30 Hour Famine experience, you and your students will have a vivid and tangible reminder of how the kingdom has impacted you.



Module Four



NOW: What's going on now?

Which Would You Choose?

You'll need:

- Just this here paper—and that's it!

Welcome students and ask for four volunteers who say they're good at making hard decisions. You could choose to involve the whole group by having them give input to the four volunteers during this activity. Another option would be to divide your students into smaller groups; after you read each choice, give the groups some time to make their decisions and then ask them to share why they chose that action before you read aloud the consequences.

Ask the volunteers (or small groups): **What are some hard decisions you've made lately? How do you usually make tough decisions? What kinds of factors go into that process?**

Explain: **Today we're going to look at the connections between hunger and another worldwide crisis: the AIDS pandemic. I want you to imagine you're a 15-year-old boy living in Swaziland in Africa. Your father is very sick with AIDS and is now unable to work. Your mom, 13-year-old brother, and three-year-old sister are all getting sick too, and you're wondering if they have HIV or are just getting weak from a lack of food. Every day you're faced with tough decisions—often life-and-death decisions. I'm going to give you some choices to make, and then I'll reveal the consequences of your decisions.** Read each choice one at a time. After the students have chosen their course of action, read the consequences that follow their choices.

Choice #1: School or Work?

Now that your dad is unable to work in the fields, you, as the oldest son, are crucial in providing enough money and food so your family can eat. Yet if you drop out of school, you know you'll probably live in poverty for the rest of your life. And your mom is also worried that if you quit, even when you get married and have kids, you'll struggle every day to feed them because you won't have the training you need to get a decent job. Do you stay in school, or do you drop out of school so you can work?

Consequences

Stay in school: the good news is you were able to stay in school for a while. But after six months, your mom was so sick she had to stop working. So you were forced to drop out of school anyway and work in the fields to feed your family.

Drop out of school and work: not only do you make money every day, but now your family doesn't have to pay your school fees, so they're also able to get more nutritious food than before. You're still worried about

what will happen long-term, but there's nothing you can do about that now.

Choice #2: Stay or Go?

Your uncle lives in a village 10 miles away, and he says he could use some help working in his fields. He's willing to pay you more money than you're making locally, and it's a guaranteed job for at least the next six months. But since your mom is getting weaker, you now help take care of your brother and sister when you're not working. If you leave, you're worried your mom won't be able to do that anymore. Do you stay home and hope to find the best job you can, or do you go live with your uncle for the next six months and send the money back home?

Consequences

Stay home: you end up working about 75 percent of the time, which is enough to give your family some cereal and rice every day, but meat is still a luxury. This seems especially difficult for your three-year-old sister, who has less and less energy every day.

Live with your uncle: at your uncle's house, not only do you work hard and send the money home, but you eat better at his house and feel stronger. Yet one month when you went home to visit your family and deliver your pay, you notice your three-year-old sister hasn't been bathed in days. And your 13-year-old brother is hanging out with some questionable friends (both girls and boys), which concerns you. Given your mom's weakness, you figure there's not much more she can do, so you struggle every day to decide whether or not to move back home.

Choice #3: HIV Test or Not?

AIDS finally takes your father's life. Then your mom gets an HIV test and, unsurprisingly, she also has the disease. You're wondering if you should go to the health clinic and take an HIV test too. If you do, at least you'll know if you're sick and need to rest more. You might even be able to get some medication that would help you fight the disease. But you know how people view young boys who even walk into the health clinic—they automatically assume the boys have HIV. If they saw you at the clinic, then they probably wouldn't want to hire you to work in their fields because they don't want to bring the **AIDS** curse on their lands or families. Getting the test might help you physically, but it could devastate your job prospects. Do you get the test or not?

Consequences

Taking the HIV test: the good news is you don't have HIV...yet. The bad news is a few people saw you enter the health clinic and word has already spread around the village that you have "the curse." You'll try to go to the two men who normally hire you to work in their fields and tell them you don't have HIV; but you're worried they won't believe you, and then you'll be out of work.

Not taking the HIV test: just like your mom, brother, and sister started to feel weak several months ago, you now have a harder time getting out of bed to go to work. You also start coughing more; and with every cough, you wonder if you have HIV. You try to hide your coughing from the two

men who normally hire you to work in their fields, just so they don't assume you have HIV. You're still not sure if you and your siblings really have HIV, or if you're just suffering from lack of nutrition.

Choice #4: Welcoming Cousins or Not?

Your aunt and uncle both die of AIDS, leaving their four children with no place to go. Your aunt was your mom's sister, and your mom can't bear the thought of the four children ending up on the streets. But your mom is so weak now, she's asking you to help her make the decision. You're barely able to feed yourselves as it is, without adding four more mouths to feed. Do you welcome the four kids into your home, or do you refuse to take them?

Consequences

Welcoming the four kids: your home is more crowded and food is scarcer than before, but at least your cousins don't have to live on the streets and turn to prostitution as a way to feed themselves. Yet you have to ration what little food you have even further. Your three-year-old sister is now too weak to walk. After two months, she dies from lack of nutrition. As you're digging her grave, you can't help but think she'd still be alive if your four cousins hadn't come to live with you and eaten some of your food.

Refusing the four kids: your family continues to hobble along with barely enough food to eat. Meanwhile, two of your three girl cousins become sexually involved with older men, simply as a way to feed themselves. You know these two are likely to get HIV. When you see them on the streets, you can barely look them in the eyes because you feel so guilty.

Choice #5: Stealing or Starving?

One of your friends, who lost both parents to AIDS, has told you his new strategy for feeding himself and his two brothers: he steals food. Tonight he's going to walk a few miles to a house that keeps chickens. He's hoping to catch a few, which would feed the three boys for days. He's invited you to go with him and offers to share with you whatever he steals. You haven't had meat for a week. You think it would really help your mom, who is now so weak she can barely sit up. Should you go with your friend to steal chickens?

Consequences:

Stealing chickens: the good news is you get more chickens than you expected. You both walk home with two chickens that night, enough to feed your family for a week. The meat does seem to give your mom some strength, at least for a while. She's able to sit up, has more energy, and talks more than usual. But at the end of the week, when the chicken meat is gone, she just lies on her mat again, too weak to sit up.

Not stealing chickens: two days later your mom dies. You can't help but think the chickens would have kept her alive, at least for a few more days or weeks. Now you're left all alone to take care of your brother.

Debriefing Questions:

Q: How are these choices different than the ones you make every day? How are they similar?

Q: What did these decisions show you about the connections between AIDS and hunger?

Be prepared to supplement your students' answer with the following: **You might be wondering why we're talking about AIDS in the midst of our discussions about poverty and hunger.**

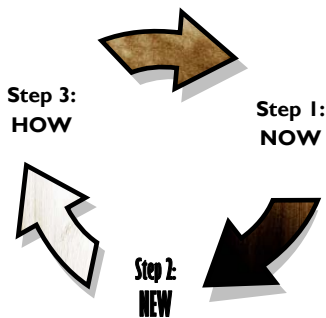
Tragically, AIDS and hunger are linked together in a vicious cycle. For instance, hunger exacerbates AIDS in many ways. First, adequate nutrition and food bolster the immune system and allow those infected with HIV to continue to live productive lives. Second, without access to safe and adequate food, people infected with HIV are often less able to take their anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs (food and water help the medicine be absorbed more effectively as well as counter the drugs' side effects) and thus more likely to die sooner. Third, people living with HIV/AIDS who lack sufficient food have less time and energy to focus on their own care as well as on preventing others in their family from contracting the disease. When faced with hunger, they are more likely to migrate in search for emergency food relief, thereby furthering the spread of HIV into new communities. Finally, there is some evidence that hunger drives women and girls into prostitution, thereby dramatically increasing their exposure to HIV.

Sadly, HIV and AIDS also make hunger and poverty even worse. HIV often afflicts the most productive members of society—those between ages 15 and 45. When those teenagers and adults get too sick to work or even die, the agricultural labor force in a region shrinks dramatically. For instance, a UNAIDS assessment in Zambia showed that families in which the head of household was chronically ill planted an astonishing 53% less than healthy families.¹⁰

Obviously, that means less food immediately for those families, but even more serious is that agricultural techniques and knowledge literally die off as adults die off. This will likely create even more poverty and hunger in regions affected by HIV and AIDS for decades to come, which as we've already seen will likely lead to an increase in both hunger and AIDS.

Close with: **We often don't act on behalf of those affected by hunger or AIDS for three reasons: either we're ignorant; we don't want to think about it, so we pretend it doesn't exist; or we're so overwhelmed that we don't know where to start. But being followers of the King means we move past our ignorance, our denial, or our despair, and we must make choices that help the people—like this 15-year-old and millions of others like him—who face these types of decisions every day.**

¹⁰ Ambassador Randall L. Tobias, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Testimony Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, D.C., May 11, 2004.



NEW: What's the Kingdom Perspective?

"Dear Francis"

You'll need:

- *Dear Francis* DVD (available for purchase for approximately \$20 at www.dearfrancis.org; you can also check out a free trailer at the website)
- TV and DVD player

Normally, each option in this **New** step takes 10-20 minutes. However, in this case, we're recommending you get a copy of *Dear Francis* by the Chronicle Project. It's a 63-minute video, and you'll definitely want to have some discussion afterward. But it's just about the best way we know of to summarize many of the complex causes and consequences involved in the AIDS crisis in Africa. We encourage you to think about using it for an entire movie night or "movie meeting" as part of your 30 Hour Famine experience. You could also consider dividing the video in half and stretching it over two weeks, if that fits your ministry schedule better. This is probably a resource that other ministries in your church could use also.

Dear Francis follows a group of Texas college students as they go to Swaziland to teach about sexual abstinence and values for three weeks. Some of the issues highlighted in the video include poverty, polygamy, child abduction, and sex as a sport. More than 12,000 people, including 6,000 high school students, have viewed *Dear Francis*. For many, it's their first in-depth exposure to the AIDS crisis in Africa. *Dear Francis* also paints a powerful picture of the problems associated with Americans viewing themselves as Africa's salvation. As you and your students will see in the video, simple solutions cannot adequately address the complicated issues involved in the spread of HIV and AIDS in Swaziland.

So if you can figure out a way to get 90 minutes with your students, show the video and then facilitate a discussion by asking questions such as:

Q: After watching *Dear Francis*, what emotions are you experiencing? What thoughts are going through your head?

Q: What information was either new or surprising to you?

Q: Of the issues *Dear Francis* raises (poverty, ancestor worship, polygamy, child abduction, sex as a sport, etc.), which do you think *most* contributes to the AIDS crisis in Africa?

Q: What other factors do you think contribute to the magnitude of the problem?

If you have time to go further into Scripture, try leading the following discussion:

Q: What do you think are God's thoughts and feelings about this epidemic?

Q: In your opinion, what are God's expectations for believers in a crisis like this?

Invite a student to read Isaiah 1:17 aloud. Point out that the fatherless and widows represent the weak and often oppressed members of society.

Q: What would it look like to seek kingdom justice in Africa?

Q: How can we encourage the oppressed, defend the cause of the fatherless, and plead the case of the widow in the midst of AIDS?

Invite a student to read James 1:27 aloud.

Q: In your own experience, how have you seen the church model “pure and faultless” religion?

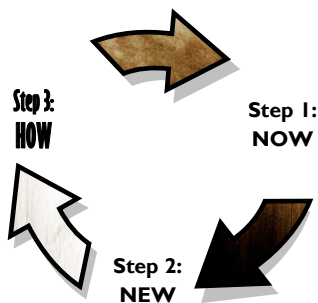
Q: How might we do more of this in the future?

Q: What, if anything, do you think the church needs to repent of as we respond to our brothers and sisters in Africa?

Q: How can we help bring the kingdom of God near to Africa and the hunger and AIDS crises?

Q: Is there one thing you’re motivated to do in response to these crises? If so, what is it?

Close in prayer, asking God to help you all make a difference in the hunger and AIDS crises.



HOW: How can we live this out?

Electricity

You'll need:

- Candles (enough to dimly light your room)
- Lighter
- White board or poster paper
- Pens

Start by asking: **What are some of the things we use each day that require electricity?** List their responses on your white board or poster paper.

When your group's responses slow down, ask them questions from the “Don't Forget” list below:

- Did you forget your refrigerator?
- Did you forget the traffic signal you went through to get here?
- Did you forget your I-pod, cell phone, computer or printer?
- Did you forget the TV or the lights in this room?
- What about the air conditioner at your school?

- Did you use an electric toothbrush to brush your teeth?
- Was the food you ate today warm? How was it heated?
- Did you pull cash out of an ATM recently?
- Did your car start this morning? (in case you didn't know, it starts by using electricity from a battery)
- Did you use a vending machine this week?

Explain: **Most of us can't imagine living without electricity. So much of what we do each day depends upon our access to electricity.**

At this point, turn out the lights in your room so that it is completely dark. Light several candles so that there is at least some light in the room.

Continue: **1.2 billion people in the world do not have access to electricity.¹¹ Let's take one country in Africa as an example: Uganda. Ninety-five percent of Ugandans do not have access to electricity from the national grid of electric power.¹²**

Q: **How would your life be different if you had no access to electricity?**

Q: **What would you do after the sun set?**

Q: **Where would you go to "cool off" in the summer and "warm up" in the winter?**

Q: **What would happen if your food couldn't be refrigerated?**

Q: **What would happen if you couldn't store blood or vaccines for those who needed it?**

Explain: **We've seen today a number of ways that AIDS and poverty are both Kingdom issues, and that they are linked to each other. Think about what it would be like to have HIV and want vaccines and medicines, as well as proper health care, and not have the resources to visit a hospital. Or if you were able to visit a doctor, imagine that he or she had no electricity in his or her home or office.**

Explain: **So the question for us now is: As we think about AIDS and hunger, what is it that God wants us to do for the kingdom?** At this point, either lead a discussion with your students, or let your students get into smaller groups to talk about what God might want them to do.

Now would be a good time to talk (either for the first time or again) about any 30 Hour Famine commitments your group would like to make.

Close in prayer, thanking God for the fact that God is the light of the world, and asking God to help you be His light to the world also (the theme of God's light was also touched on in Module 1, so feel free to refer back to that discussion). If you'd like, you could repeat the "Your Kingdom Come" exercise based on the Lord's Prayer (from the **HOW** option in Module 1). Encourage your students to translate what they've learned today into new prayers based on Jesus' words in Matthew 6:9-13. It would be interesting and encouraging, both for you and your students, to see how God continues to show you new ways that the kingdom Jesus prays about is becoming more vibrant in your students' prayers and desires.

¹¹ <http://www.thestellagrouppltd.com>

¹² <http://transcripts.cnn.com/TRANSCRIPTS>

Optional Closing: At the end of this session (and perhaps after every one), you might consider giving students 8½" x 11" pieces of paper and inviting them to draw, write, or depict what strikes them about being part of the King's response to hunger and AIDS. You could then collect these every week and keep them in a three-ring binder for the students to peruse throughout the series. Then at the end of your 30 Hour Famine experience, you and your students will have a vivid and tangible reminder of how the kingdom has impacted you.

Quotes for a PowerPoint/DVD Presentation

The following quotes are from a previous One Life Revolution curriculum. They are from Africans affected by AIDS. If you'd like, you can play the "Module 4 Quotes" PowerPoint during your time with students. This PowerPoint is available at www.30hourfamine.org. (Look for the Fuller Curriculum page in the Leaders area.)

"Every morning I used to sell my eggs and vegetables—and an occasional sheep or goat—in the village...But so many people are dying in the village...especially fathers...and with the fathers gone, how will their widows or children afford to buy what I bring to market?...All I know is that I'm losing customers to AIDS...and even if no one in my family gets that disease, we may still go hungry next year. For there aren't enough customers to buy my produce anymore."

"My husband is a farmer, and he has AIDS...If the only one we were missing from the work in the farm was my husband, that would be very difficult by itself. But always one of us must tend to him, he is so sick...And when my husband finally dies, things will be much, much worse, not better. For already his parents accuse me of cursing him with AIDS...and I am afraid they will use their influence in the village to take our land from me then. And then what shall I do?"

"The majority of old men think it is women who spread AIDS in families. Others think that to get AIDS one must have been promiscuous to others. It is [seen as] a curse on the family."

"My father-in-law sold land that belonged to his deceased son, my late husband—including the plot where I, a widow, lived. I was told to go where I got AIDS from!"

"I knew my husband was having sex outside our marriage with several partners, but I have no power to refuse sex with him according to our tradition. He is my husband and had paid bride wealth. I tested HIV positive and am bitter. And because of my socioeconomic status, I cannot just walk away."

"My in-laws blame me for their son's death. They have severed all relationships with me. They never discriminated with their son, but to me they say, 'You also have AIDS. Stay happily wherever you are.' I took great care of their son—never felt dirty cleaning him up...I have lost faith in everybody."

"Like my mother, I was married when I was 14. My husband was 32...I knew from town gossip that he had been with many young women before he married me. He chose me because I was young—he believed that young girls do not have AIDS. I have also heard that some men think that sex with a virgin removes the virus from them..."

“I have been married three years and have two children...one of them does not seem healthy, but there is no doctor in our village, and my husband will not let me go to Ndola, the nearest city.”

“I was a health worker when I discovered I was HIV-positive. When I was a young guy, it was the ‘in thing’ with us to go out with a lot of partners [it still is with young men]. We have a Shono proverb: ‘A strong bull is seen by scars.’ Even if you got a sexually transmitted disease, it just showed your virility.”