
Did You Know

1 out of every 7 individuals in South Dakota lives at or below the poverty line.

Combined the Sioux Falls and Rapid City food pantries served over 65,000 people last year.

Almost one-half of those served by food pantries in South Dakota are infants and children.

Resources

Feeding South Dakota
feedingsouthdakota.org

ELCA World Hunger
elca.org

Bread for the World
bread.org

South Dakota Synod
sdsynod.org

If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

~James 2:15-16

Vision Practice 3

Feed All Whose Bodies Lack Nourishment

Opening Prayer

God of Abundant Life, through your disciples, you fed the 5,000 as once you had fed your people manna in the wilderness. Day by day, God, you are our provision. As a mustard seed grows into the greatest of all plants, may the seed of your Word be grown in our life together that we would become a life-giving sign of your Kingdom; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Discussion Question(s) *invite each person to respond to one of the following questions*

1. Have you ever struggled with growing something in your yard or in a garden?
2. Have you ever been a part of something that became much larger /better than expected?
3. Has someone ever encountered you with a small gesture that made a big difference?

Focus Text Mark 4:30-32

[Jesus] also said, "With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable will we use for it? ³¹It is like a mustard seed, which, when sown upon the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; ³²yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade."

Engaging the Text

"The lame will walk, the blind will see and the dead will live again..." The promises of the Kingdom of God are great. Yet, the reality of our human condition is frail. Despite the miracles and signs people have questions. What is the kingdom of God? How does it work? When will it come?

In response Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a seed. Something small and insignificant. Something by itself which can do nothing. Yet, when planted in soil, fed with water and sun, the seed becomes more. More than a combination of just seed and soil and water and sun – but instead a new creation.

Jesus' parable reminds us of a parable God told long ago through the prophet Ezekiel. "I will take a spring...I myself will plant it...in order that it

may produce boughs and bear fruit...under it every kind of bird will live.” (Ezekiel 17:22-24)

Jesus’ parable is an encouragement to the small, disregarded and seemingly insignificant disciples. What you do, who you are matters. God is at work. Kingdom acts are never done in isolation but rather always begin with God are sustained by God and brought to completion by God. “...what we will be has not yet been revealed.” (1 John 3:2)

Applying the Text to the Vision Practice

The disturbing reality of the hungry in our world is so overwhelming that the small gifts we have to offer seem inconsequential in their ability to affect change. Yet, the parable of the mustard seed reminds us that there is often more potential in small kingdom acts (such as feeding the hungry) than we would first imagine. This is true because our kingdom acts are NOT “our” kingdom acts but rather they are God’s. God’s work. Our hands. God is at work giving the world “daily bread”. Good news! Our small seeds of compassion, when **given** away, become kingdom acts growing into “the greatest of all shrubs” providing life for all.



Respond and Celebrate

Make two columns. In the first column list all the ways that the people of your congregation feed the hungry. This should include formal ministries, participation in other ministries and even things that you have heard people do individually. In the second column, list ideas of other things that you might be able to do in your congregation to participate in feeding the hungry of this world. Include all ideas big and small. Rejoice! Your seeds are accomplishing big things.

Closing Song Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (ELW #674)

Closing Prayer

Heavenly Father, you are the provider of all good things. We give you thanks for your many acts of providence and seek your forgiveness for the ways our sin have stopped all from being fed. Save and redeem us that we may be joyful signs of your abundant blessing, offering bread for the hungry and hope for the brokenhearted. We ask through Jesus Christ our Lord, the Bread of Life. Amen.