

Children's Sermons and Bulletin

Pockets of Faith

props and preparation: an old coat or apron (the older the better) that contains several pockets. Place a number of small items that represent God's love and how we should think about sharing in the pockets.

I have this old coat. What do you notice about it? [The children may say that it is really old or really large or brown or black or they may recognize that it has several pockets. Be sure not to ignore their responses. Rather, affirm what they say and then, if no one has suggested that there are many pockets, invite them to notice this feature.]

What are pockets for? To hold things in case of emergency, to hold things that you use everyday, to hold things that are very important to you. Most clothes have pockets for these purposes. Sometimes people carry knapsacks or pocketbooks [you might produce one]. What a great word pocketbook a whole book of pockets. What do you think I have in these pockets? [As you speak about one or more of the items, produce them from the pockets and show them to the children.] Pockets can teach us important things about our faith and about sharing God's love.

Pockets hold things that are special to us, like pictures of our family. Our congregation is a special family, too. Pockets hold useful things like pencils, rubber bands or money. Our faith teaches us useful things the ten commandments, how to love our neighbor things we can use in our day-to-day lives.

Pockets hold small, special toys we love to play with. Our faith also brings us joy. The music makes us smile and we love being here with our friends.

Pockets hold keys that help us unlock doors. Belief in God open doors too. They hold notes that remind us of things we must do. Sometimes they hold medicine or tissues or band aids that help us when we aren't feeling well, just like our faith that helps heal our hearts when we're sad.

Since your pockets go with you wherever you go, they are a good place to keep share-able things. Your faith is God is share-able, too. Sharing is an important part of what Jesus says we should do.

Our congregation is celebrating One Great Hour of Sharing, a time when Christians from all around the country share with those in need. Think about the things that are special to you like the things in your pockets and how you can share them with others. If you do, you will be following God's commandments and making the world a better place.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

This children's sermon may need to be adapted depending on your congregation's promotion plans. You may want to review the bracketed area in particular to be sure it reflects what your congregation will be doing.

Good morning, boys and girls. I have something here that you might remember from last year. (Hold up bank). Do you know what it is? (Allow time for responses.) That's right, it's a bank. Do you remember how we used the bank? To save money for our One Great Hour of Sharing offerings. We're going to collect everyone's One Great Hour of Sharing offerings on Easter Sunday, which is _____ this year. Between now and then, you can think of ways to earn money or save money to put into your banks. [Starting next Sunday there will be a sharing calendar on the back of the inserts that you will find in your church bulletins. You can read these with your parents. This year we're going to talk each Sunday about ways we can help fill the world with God's love. (Show globe or map.) Each Sunday I'm going to show you some places where our One Great Hour of Sharing offerings have been used.] But first, let's think about this world. Who made the world? That's right. God made it. And when it was finished, God looked at it and saw that it was very good. God loved it so much. All of it. The sky and stars, the moon and sun, the water and land, the plants and animals. And the people. Oh, God loved it so! But you remember that the people decided to disobey God and the world started having problems. And it has continued. We still disobey God, and the world that God created in love is full of hate and fear and all sorts of bad things. But the Bible tells us that when we give our lives to God, then we will want to be part of God's loving work, to help God fill the world with love again. How can we do that? (Time for responses.) Here at home, we can help others, we can share what we have. But how can we help fill the world in faraway places with love? Since we can't go to these places, we send our money and prayers instead. So during these few weeks before Easter, let's be praying for ways to show God's love all over the world, and ways we can share our money with others who are at work trying to fill their part of the world with love.

Virginia Stevens, Hunger Action Enabler
Presbytery of Western North Carolina
One Great Hour of Sharing Text

Children's Sermon

Introduction: Children are eager to grow up, to become big. They usually equate bigness with power and strength. The purpose of this children's sermon is to emphasize that big is not always better, that small things often work as well as big things, and that a big heart is possible for anyone regardless of his or her size. Help children think about whether big is always better. Help them understand that they don't have to be large to have a big heart. Relate the big heart to giving on One Great Hour of Sharing.

Make your own adaptation of this material as your circumstances dictate.

Props: several balls of different sizes, such as a pingpong ball, golf ball, softball, and a basketball)

What does it mean to be BIG? Does it mean to be large? Or to be strong? Is big always better?

I brought some balls here today. Each one is for a different game. This is a pingpong ball; it is small and very light. And here is a golf ball; it is a little bigger and much heavier. Could you play a better game of pingpong with it?

Here is a softball; it is bigger and heavier than the golf ball. Could you play golf better with the softball?

And here is a basketball; it is the biggest ball I brought. Could you play pingpong or golf or softball with it?

So, being bigger is not always better. It depends on the game you want to play. You can't play basketball with a pingpong ball, but neither can you play pingpong with a basketball.

When Paul was writing to his Christian friend in Corinth, he suggested that they have big hearts. What do you think he meant? Does it mean that the heart beating in your chest gets really big? Probably not. It means that when you do really good things for others you have a big heart, and big hearts are found in people of all sizes.

Wonderful things are possible when you have a big heart. You can take care of your world instead of using it up. You can play fair even when you could get away without being fair. You can give something of yours to a friend or to someone you don't even know, just because he or she needs it.

Today we are going to take an offering for people we don't know, just because they need help and because we want to have big loving hearts. We call the offering One Great Hour of Sharing.

You may not have a lot to give, perhaps only a few pennies or a quarter. Your parents may only have a few dollars. What makes our coins and dollars really big is that we take what we have and share it or give some of it away. And what we give becomes really big when we add it to the pennies and quarters and dollars given in churches all across our country.

Jesus doesn't ask us to be bigger than we are. But Jesus does ask us to open our hearts no matter what our size. Remember that you are always big enough to share and to give. That's what Jesus asks us to do; and we can, if we really try.

PRAYER: O God, help us to have big hearts no matter what our size, so we can help take care of our world, do what is fair and right, and give to others who need our help. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Church is like a Box of Crayons

props: a box of crayons some of them well used and some unused and a large sheet of newsprint.

Did you ever think that a box of crayons can represent our church? [Open the box of crayons. As you speak, draw on newsprint different lines or shapes or spell out the word compassion in different colors or different styles of lettering. You don't need to be an artist to do this; just don't make things too complicated or you might have the children draw a line or a letter]. The crayons are different colors, just like there are different colors of people. These crayons draw different looking lines, but they can create similar shapes. Some of the crayons are almost new. Like people who have recently become Christians and have a sharply defined faith, they draw with a thin line.

Other crayons in this box are already worn down and the lines that they draw are broad strokes. Sometimes, people who have been part of the church for a long time have a strong faith. God uses them to make bold lines.

Each crayon can only draw one color, but when lines are drawn close together, a kind of rainbow appears. When several crayons are combined into one picture the browns and the yellows, the thins new ones and the wide old ones the picture is both more complete and more beautiful.

In our congregation, we are celebrating One Great Hour of Sharing. This is an offering that Christians all around the country take each year to help people in need. One of the themes that we are using this year is color the world with compassion. By working together, Christians who are different demonstrate the unity that God intended. This way, we can create a more complete and beautiful expression of how God's love can be shared.

Clowning Skit for One Great Hour of Sharing/Children's Message John 21:15-19

by Carol Thomas, Trinity Presbyterian Church, Topeka, KS

Clown enters and makes production of sitting down to an elaborate feast/picnic.

(Bring in small table and large picnic basket with tablecloth, salt & pepper, flowers for the table, oversize silverware, plate and large sub sandwich – you can use a big loaf of French bread and disguise it to look like a sub. Make a show of setting everything up and looking very pleased before beginning to eat. A big sigh might help convey this.)

Just as she is about to take her first bite, a voice is heard, "Do you love me?"

Clown is surprised, then realizes who's talking and nods.

Voice says, "Feed my sheep."

Clown looks around for "sheep" as kids enter carrying signs saying: "I'm hungry", "I'm thirsty", "I lost my home in the earthquake", etc. and sit on the front row. *(get other adults to help with this).*

Seeing no "sheep", the clown gives up and sits back down to eat.

Once again the voice questions the clown just as she is about to eat, "Do you love me?" Clown responds by nodding.

Voice again says, "Feed my sheep." *(Each time the clown gets these interruptions/instructions, she is increasingly exasperated.)*

The clown is really hunting now *(overlooking children with signs – maybe even standing on a front pew & looking out over congregation)* and a few people in congregation hold up stuffed sheep. Clown is a bit bewildered, goes to and gives some food to the stuffed sheep, which doesn't seem very satisfactory. Clown acts like she's done all she can do, shrugs and sits down to eat again.

Again the question from God, nodding and instructions. ("Do you love me?" nod "Feed my sheep.")

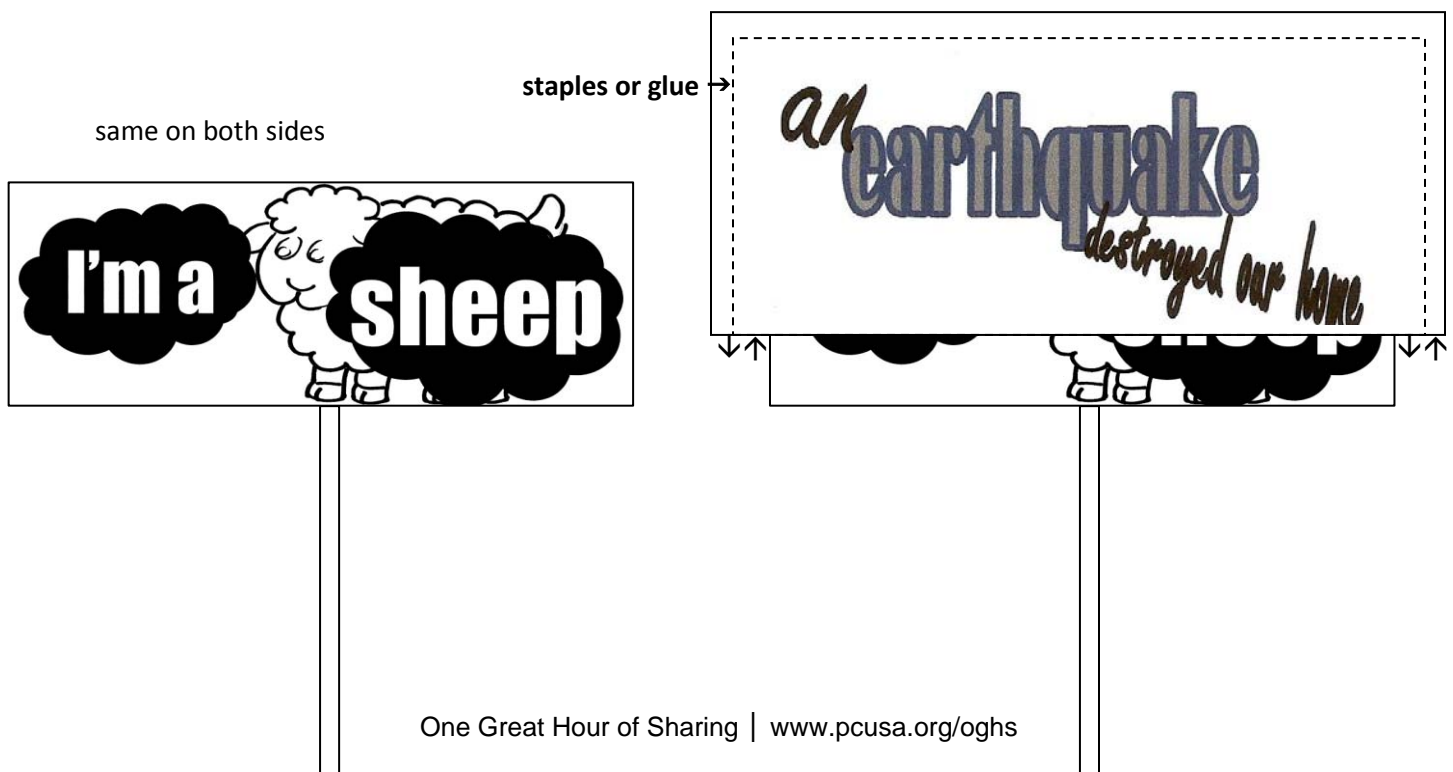
(While this is going on, the adult helpers will be switching all the kids' signs to say "I am a sheep".)

The clown is clearly exasperated but, as the children hold up their new signs, realizes what the voice meant, makes a show of recognition, and breaks off big hunks of bread to give all of them. The end. *(slide about One Great Hour of Sharing on the screen)*

Making signs:

We glued the sheep picture below on both sides of foam board attached to ¼" wooden dowel rods.

Each of the other signs was printed on two even bigger pieces of paper. These two pieces of paper were placed back to back and stapled or glued together along the top edge and both sides. This left the bottom edge open (like a pocket) to slide down over the "I'm a sheep" signs. Then during the skit, the external sign could be pulled off easily – revealing the "I'm a sheep" sign



Fill the World With Love

A skit for older children

Directions: If you have a lot of children, some of them can be the chorus, while others are the speakers. If there are a few children, they can both sing and speak. In this script, the chorus and the speakers are treated as two different groups, but the script works the same way if you have only one group.

The chorus comes to the front of the sanctuary and stands around a globe or map. If it is an inflatable globe, leave it almost completely inflated. If it is a map, leave it almost completely colored in. The chorus sings "Jesus Loves the Little Children."

Each of the speakers enters from different directions, if possible, and comes to stand in front of the chorus and on either side of the globe.

Fernando: I am Fernando of the Philippines. My father cut timber for a living. But because too many trees were cut from the mountainside, there was nothing to stop the rains from flooding our village. Now our homes are gone and my father no longer has work to do. You sing of Jesus' love. But I am poor and hungry. Show me that love.

Sita (pronounced SEE-tah): I am Sita of India. My father repairs shoes for a living. We live and sleep on the sidewalk where he works. All my brothers and sisters except my brother Ravi and I have died of sickness. We don't have enough money to buy food or medicine. You sing of Jesus' love. But I live on the streets and cannot go to school. Show me God's love.

Naim (pronounced Nah-EEM): I am Naim of Hizma. My father works in a market in Jerusalem. But many times we are given curfews and have to stay in our houses. Then there is little to eat. You sing of Jesus' love. But I am afraid and sometimes I am hungry. Show me God's love.

Oana (pronounced WAH-nah): I am Oana of Romania. My parents left the country because the government wouldn't allow them to have good jobs and we were poor. I couldn't go because I had a heart problem. They said they would bring me to them as soon as they have a new home. But they are still waiting in a refugee camp for someone to help them. You sing of Jesus' love. But I miss my parents. Show me God's love.

American child: I am (*child's own name*) of (*your church*). Fernando, I know that people in your village are being helped to find new ways of making a living. One Great Hour of Sharing offerings showed God's love. Sita, I know that your father has a new shoe repair machine, and that you are now going to school. One Great Hour of Sharing offerings will help others like you. Naim, I know that your mother will be raising turkeys as well as chickens to help keep the family supplied with food and money when your father cannot work. One Great Hour of Sharing offerings are being used to build the coops. And Oana, I know that it was One Great Hour of Sharing offerings that helped you get to the United States to be with your parents. There are many ways others can show you God's love, but the way I can do that is through One Great Hour of Sharing. Jesus does love ALL the children, and grown-ups, of the world.

One Great Hour of Sharing Children's Skits

Chorus and speakers all sing together to the tune of "Jesus Loves Me." (While the chorus and speakers are singing, the American child can finish blowing up the globe or color in the last bit of the globe or map.)

Jesus taught us how to share
and show God's love everywhere.
Help us fill the world with love
So everyone praises God above.
Yes, Jesus loves me.
Yes, Jesus loves you.
Yes, Jesus loves us.
The Bible tells us so.

THE CASE OF THE "FISHY" LOOKING TOOLS

In advance: Provide the children of the church with various materials which would be purchased with One Great Hour of Sharing funds. At a designated time, have them bring the tools to the front of the sanctuary. (*If they are used to sitting down during this time, let them do so.*) Also give young people or older children the script to read. These readers could come up with the children or just rise from their seats in the congregation to read their parts. If young people or children are readers, you'll probably want to "run through" the skit a couple of times before actually doing it.

A character based on Sherlock Holmes of Sesame Street enters. (*Watch Sesame Street to find out more about him! Or you might locate him in the library.*)

Sherlock Hemlock: There's something fishy going on here. This is a church. There should be offering plates and hymn books and a choir here. And I see those. But I also see hoes and rakes and blankets and seeds and a whole lot of other things. Those aren't used by churches. What's going on?

Reader #1: But, Mr. Hemlock, they are used by churches. The money we give to One Great Hour of Sharing is used for things like we have here to help people around the world...

Reader #2: ...hoes and rakes to help people grow food in the Dominican Republic...

Reader #3: ...blankets to keep people warm after Hurricane Hugo or the earthquake or when disaster strikes anywhere...

Reader #4: ...seeds to grow food and trees in Senegal...

Reader #5: ...pots and pans to prepare food for poor children in Mexico...

Reader #6: ...maps and games and movies and books to help us learn more that we can do...

Reader #7: ...wrenches to help farmers build wells in the Philippines...

Reader #8: ...food to feed the starving in Sudan and Somalia.

Sherlock Hemlock: Ah. The mystery is solved. I see that God's work goes on outside the church too. Now the question is, can't we do more?

Leader: Let's pray. Thank you, God, that we can be part of your work all over the world through our One Great Hour of Sharing offering. Help us share more so that there will be more joy. In Jesus' name. Amen.

SKIT

This skit (*or, more accurately, this narrated pantomime*) can be used at the time of a minute for mission or as a children's sermon.

(The clown picks up a deflated globe, looks at it curiously, then tries to blow it up with no success. Alternatively, an ordinary person can walk up to the table and do the same, then lay the globe on a table or altar after he/she has no success, and walk away.)

Narrator: The world is in pretty bad shape. Millions of hungry people have nothing to eat because of drought, war, or poverty.

(The clown takes an empty plate off the table while rubbing stomach, or a person can walk by carrying an empty plate and rubbing stomach hungrily.)

Millions of people have no clean water and must bathe, do their laundry, bring their animals to drink in the same river water which people must drink. This dirty water makes them sick and their children die, but they have no choice.

(The clown picks up jar of dirty water and holds it at arm's length with a disgusted look, or a person walks by with jar of dirty water doing the same.)

Millions of people are victims of disasters C earthquakes, floods, and hurricanes. They become homeless with family members killed or injured.

(The clown looks at pieces of wood or bricks and shakes head sadly, or person walks by looking dejected, with an armload of debris.)

Millions of people want to work but have no jobs. Whole communities need industry but have no skills or money to start small businesses. Sometimes workers are paid such small amounts that they can barely feed their families.

(The clown turns out pockets or shakes pocketbook upside down, or a person walks by doing the same.)

Yes, the world is in terrible shape. There seems to be so little love or hope. What can we do? We can't save the world's hungry or homeless or poor.

(The clown shrugs shoulders and throws deflated globe into trash can, or a person walks up to globe on table, throws it in trash can, and walks away shrugging shoulders.)

Wait! Here come the Presbyterians bringing gifts. It seems they have taken One Great Hour of Sharing offerings and are able to help.

(The clown perks up, looking around.)

Here's food for the hungry--grains, vegetables and fruits. And seeds to plant so the poor can grow their own food. Look, there are tools too! Where did all this come from? Oh! The Presbyterian Hunger Program. Thank you, friends!

(The clown nods excitedly and claps hands as messengers bring in a bag of groceries, seeds and a hoe, and put them on a table or altar. As messengers walk away, the clown gets globe out of trash can and begins to blow it up. Or the "ordinary" person walks back, looks at the gifts, smiles, gets the globe and begins blowing it up slowly as the narrator continues until all the gifts have been put on table.)

One Great Hour of Sharing Children's Skits

Here are more gifts. There are tools to help the victims of disasters. Here are clean water and wells for whole communities. Here are blankets for the refugees. Did you say Presbyterian Disaster Assistance donated these things? Thank you, friends!

(The messengers bring blankets, jar of clean water, shovel and put them on the table. Clown or person shakes hands with messengers, then continues blowing up globe.)

Here come more friends with different gifts: tools to learn skills, and money to help the unemployed start their own small businesses. You say they want to help the poor to help themselves? That's the Self-Development of People program. Thank you, friends!

(The messengers bring hammer and a large dollar bill and lay them on the table; clown or person dances around, blowing up globe.)

I'm sure these things will help the suffering of our world in many wonderful ways. The One Great Hour of Sharing offering achieves far more than we realize as it touches the lives of people around the world. It fills the world with God's love!

(The clown or person hugs the fully inflated globe, then holds it up high.)

adapted from a skit by Karen Schmidt, Hunger Action Enabler Philadelphia Presbytery

Minute for Mission Skit

Speaker: I'm here today to ask that you all get behind the One Great Hour of Sharing offering again this year. We did okay last year, but I know that we can do a lot better.

Inquirer #1: (*Standing up from the congregation*): Wait a minute. Before you go any farther, I have some questions. I know that you always say that the One Great Hour of Sharing offering goes to programs that help those who are poor and oppressed. But that's just not specific enough for me. What in the world are these programs?

Speaker: Well, um. Let's see. There are three programs funded by One Great Hour of Sharing, the Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. The offering is divided pretty much equally among them.

Inquirer #1: That's still not specific enough. I think I know about the Hunger Program, but the other two, what are they?

Speaker: Self-Development of People gives grants to low income people that have worked out a plan to address their specific problems. For example, a grant went to the community of Pocahontas, in the southeast corner of Virginia to set up a Christian action center to help in community development. Presbyterian Disaster Assistance has three programs. It steps in when there are catastrophes such as Hurricane Andrew, the earthquake in California, or the floods in the Midwest. It also works with refugees, in some cases helping them organize camps and in others assisting individuals or families to resettle in another country. Finally, it supports church-based efforts at community development.

Inquirer #2: Well, since you're answering questions, I've got one for you. How does the money get to where it's supposed to go? I don't want any food rotting on the docks!

Speaker: I guess that's a really important aspect of the work that the Presbyterian Church does. As much as possible, it works through the churches and church-related organizations in the countries where the help is being sent. And since they understand their own culture and bureaucracy better than we do, aid given this way is usually more effectively used. The other advantage in working this way is that it strengthens the witness of the local church.

Inquirer #3: I'm convinced that giving to One Great Hour of Sharing is something we ought to do. But what I want to know is, how well did we do last year?

Speaker: Last year our church gave _____; that's around \$_____ per person.

Youth: _____? A meal at McDonald's costs (*more than almost as much as*) that! That's not much!

Speaker: As I was starting to say, we did all right with our One Great Hour of Sharing offering last year, but there's a lot more we can do. Each week between now and Easter, you'll be hearing or reading about how the offering is used. Listen and read carefully, pray about it, and come prepared with your offering on Easter Sunday.

(This should always be done in true "Rap" style)

MOLLY POCKETS

Narrator: Once there was a little girl named Molly. She lived in the country and loved to collect things: smooth rocks from the creek bed, dried flowers, old tools, pencil erasers, paper clips.

Molly: (in the background) Ooooh, here's a paper clip to add to my paper clip collection.

Narrator: Molly always picked up bottles or cans to recycle them. She collected big things and little things. She spent lots of time alone and other children made fun of her. But her collections seemed to keep her happy.

Molly's grandfather whom she loved dearly understood her. He had been a collector, too. Since he knew that she loved collecting, he gave her his old carpentry jacket.

Grandfather: Molly, I know this jacket doesn't look like much, but it can help you gather your things. I want you to have it.

Molly: How come, Grampa?

Grandfather: Just because.

Narrator: Sure enough, the jacket was old and frayed and, of course, it was too big for her. But Molly loved it and wore it everywhere. She loved the way it smelled of sawdust and turpentine. She loved that her grandfather had given it to her for no special reason. Most of all, she loved it because it had so many pockets! She could collect more things than ever! She wore it so often, the other kids teased her and gave her the nickname Molly Pockets. They teased her all the time. Even though she didn't say anything, their teasing bothered her. Still, she loved the jacket and continued to wear it every day.

One day Molly was walking home after school. She went the same way every day past the thorn bushes, the old maple tree, the rock wall that someone had built a long time ago and then around the long turn to the farmhouse where she lived. She was walking alone, as usual, when she heard someone crying by the thorn bushes by the side of the road. It was LaKeesha, a girl Molly knew from school. She was bent over and peering hard into the thorny bushes, and was crying.

Molly: LaKeesha, what's wrong?

LaKeesha: My mother gave me some money to buy flour for bread she was going to bake. I had the money in my hand and I was, like, skipping along and I dropped it and it's somewhere in these scratchy bushes. I know it's in here someplace, but I can't find it. I don't know what to do.

Narrator: Molly thought for a moment, and then she had an idea.

Molly: I have just the thing in my jacket.

LaKeesha: Oh, sure, Molly Pockets, like you really have money in that jacket.

Molly: No, not money, something else.

Narrator: What do you think Molly had in her pockets to help LaKeesha look for her money in the thorn bushes? Use your imagination. There is no right or wrong answer.

LaKeesha: There it is! My money! Wow! Thanks, Molly!

Molly: That's okay. Here, LaKeesha, I think you need this more than me.

Narrator: Molly reached into one of her pockets and pulled out a small pouch with a drawstring that closed it tight.

Molly: Next time you have something special to carry, you can put it in this pouch. That way, you won't lose it.

Narrator: LaKeesha quietly took the pouch. She felt bad that she had teased Molly, but Molly didn't seem to notice. She waved good-bye and continued on her way home.

As she came to the big maple tree, Molly thought about how she loved that big old tree, especially in the fall when the leaves turned bright yellow. She never saw such a yellow anywhere. She was sure the tree glowed in the dark, and often wondered how God could create such a bright color.

At the base of the tree, where Molly had often collected the fallen leaves, some older boys were building a clubhouse. They were arguing with each other because they were having trouble getting the old scrap lumber they had found to fit together and they had no tools.

Boy #1: This isn't working!

Boy #2: Nothing fits!

Boy #1: These things won't stay together!

Boy #2: This was a dumb idea, anyway!

Narrator: Now these boys often teased Molly. But today, they were so busy bickering with each other that they didn't even notice her as she passed by.

A little farther, Molly saw a smaller boy she knew his name was Peter sitting by himself and drawing aimlessly in the dirt. He also teased her, but today he just seemed sad. Bravely, Molly approached him.

Molly: What's the matter, Peter?

Peter: (startled) Ahh! Who's that?! Oh, it's just you, Molly Pockets. Why do you want to know? You wouldn't understand anyway.

Molly: I might.

Peter: Nah, how could you? You're just a girl.

Molly: Yeah, but I still might.

One Great Hour of Sharing Children's Skits

Peter: The guys are building a clubhouse and they won't let me help. They said I was to...uh...too...too small.

Narrator: "I know something about being made fun of," Molly thought, but she kept this feeling to herself. She walked slowly over to Peter.

Molly: That's not fair.

Peter: Fair? Who said anything about fair? I'm just too small, that's all. It happens all the time.

Molly: Maybe I have something in my grandfather's jacket that can help.

Peter: Oh, sure, Molly Pockets. What are you going to do, make me bigger?

Molly: No, something better than that. My grandfather used to be a carpenter, you know. This is a carpenter's jacket. I have some tools that might be just what your friends need. Maybe if you go over there with these tools, they'll let you help. Especially if I show you how to use them. Then they'll need you to finish building their clubhouse.

Narrator: Peter's face lit up when he saw what Molly offered. She quickly taught him how to use the tools and he ran off to try to join his friends.

What do you think Molly gave Peter to use? Take a few minutes to talk about or draw your ideas.

Molly continued on her way home. She was just thinking that this had been quite an afternoon when she noticed April, with her head in her hands and looking very sad, sitting on the old rock wall.

Molly: What's wrong, April?

April: Oh, Molly Pockets, you just wouldn't understand.

Narrator: Molly had heard this before, but it seemed that she understood better than people thought.

Molly: You never know.

Narrator: April just sat there for a moment. She never took her chin off her hands. But soon, she decided to tell Molly what was bothering her.

April: Well, my cousin just left. She was visiting from the city. Her parents are rich and she was showing off all her stuff. She had this special necklace that she said was made of gold. I don't have any necklace at all. I know it's not that my mother doesn't love me. It's just that she can't afford to give me nice things...I'll never have nice things.

Narrator: Now this was a tough one for Molly. Twice on her way home, she had helped someone by giving them things from her collections. These were things she liked because Molly liked everything she collected but they weren't things that really mattered to her. April was sad because she didn't think she'd ever have nice things. Molly knew that she could help, but in order to do so, she'd have to give up something very special to her. She thought maybe she had done enough to help people already.

Molly went back and forth in her mind. Then something she remembered about her grandfather made her reach inside her jacket.

Molly: Here, April, you can have this. It's my most special thing, but I want you to have it.

April: How come?

Molly: Just because...

April: But, Molly, you hardly even know me.

Molly: I know, but I know what it means to feel sad, and I want you to have it so that you don't have to feel sad anymore.

April: This is beautiful. How can I ever pay you back?

Molly: (shrugging) You don't have to pay me back. I just want to give it to you.

Narrator: What do you think Molly gave to April? What do you think it was about her grandfather that caused Molly to want to give away her most special thing? Was it really for "no reason"? Talk about or draw your ideas.

As Molly left April and headed around the bend to the old farm house where she lived, she had mixed feelings. She felt good about helping people, but she was also a little sad and mad, too because she had given away so many things that she really liked, especially her gift to April. She even felt a little stupid. She didn't tell anybody in her family that night and she went to bed wondering if she had done the right thing.

Early the next morning, Molly left home to walk to school. The sun shone brightly as she rounded the big bend. As usual, she was alone. As usual, she wore her grandfather's jacket. But this time, her pockets were lighter than usual. She remembered what she shared the day before. Again, she felt mixed feelings because she knew she would miss those things.

As she came upon the old rock wall, April was waiting for her.

April: (*calling out*) Molly! Can I walk to school with you?

Molly: (*surprised*) Sure.

Narrator: Molly was surprised. April had never walked to school with her before. As the two girls walked along, April started jabbering away about how she was going to write to her cousin and tell her about the gift that Molly had given her. She couldn't wait to brag about the fact that someone had given her a gift "for no reason." She was sure that no one had ever done that for her cousin and it made April feel really special.

It made Molly feel special too. "Just because..." she said to herself, "just like my grandfather did with my jacket."

When they passed the old maple tree, Peter came charging up to the road.

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Peter: (shouting) Molly! Molly! Here are your tools back. These were great and I was the only one who knew how to use them right. Boy, your grandfather must have been the coolest guy. Hey, can I walk the rest of the way to school with you?

Molly: Sure. Hey, could I see your clubhouse?

Peter: Uhhh. I don't know.

April: Oh, yeah! Me, too?

Peter: Well, I'll have to ask the other guys.

Molly and April: (exasperated) Oh, boys!

Narrator: The three of them walked on talking about tools and gifts and grandfathers. As they passed by the thorn bushes, they heard someone calling out from down the road behind them.

LaKeesha: Molly! Molly! Whew! I was afraid I'd be late. I didn't think I'd catch up to you.

April: We better hurry or we'll all be late.

LaKeesha: Wait. Molly, I brought you something.

Narrator: LaKeesha opened the pouch that Molly had given her. She reached in and pulled out a piece of cinnamon-nut bread and handed it to Molly.

Molly took a whiff and the nutty aroma smelled wonderfully sweet and delicious.

Molly: Wow, this smells good.

LaKeesha: It's got nuts and cinnamon in it. It's my favorite. I wanted you to have a piece for helping me yesterday. C'mon, we better get going.

Narrator: The four children hurried on to school, talking and laughing. It was a great day. Molly didn't have any mixed feelings anymore. She knew that she had done the right thing. And besides, no one had called her Molly Pockets all morning.

Molly shared some of her special things with her friends, for no reason, and without expecting anything in return. Is this actually what happened? Talk about or draw how you think the four children looked when they arrived at school.

Puppet Show for Hunger Meal

(written by Krista Lovell, Farmville Presbyterian Church, Virginia)

SCENE 1: Jesus Feeds 5000 (based on John 6:3-13)

Characters: Gramps
Granny (with large picnic basket)
Jesus
Andrew
Faith (a girl with a small lunch bag)
Narrator

Setting: Jesus and Andrew are talking on one side of the stage. Gramps, Granny and Faith are on the opposite side.

Narrator: (from offstage) As Jesus went across Lake Galilee, a large crowd followed him, because they had seen his miracles of healing the sick. Jesus went up a hill and sat down with his disciples. Jesus looked around and saw that a large crowd was coming to him, so he asked his disciples how they could feed all the people. Knowing that they did not have enough money to feed all the people on the hillside that day, the disciples began asking the people to share their food with the crowd.

(Andrew leaves Jesus and goes over to Granny and pantomimes asking her for food. Granny shakes her head No and Andrew moves back to Jesus)

Granny: Did you hear what that young man just asked us?

Gramps: Now Granny, you know that I don't hear so good these days.

Granny: Well, let me tell you! That young man, I think that he's a friend of Jesus, just came up **and** asked if we would share our lunch with all these people!

Gramps: (chuckles) He must have seen you this morning packing all that food! You know you packed enough for 5000 people in that basket. Who did you think was going to join us? The entire town!

Granny: Now get on Gramps. You never know how much food you'll need for an outing such as this. I didn't know how long we'd be sitting on this hillside. You know me, always prepared.

Gramps: Well, did you tell the nice young man that we could share some of our food?

Granny: Have you gone mad? If I give our food away, then I might not have enough for us. After all, you don't know how long we'll be sitting here. Besides, why didn't all these people plan their lunch like I did. Didn't they know that they would get hungry? I just can't be responsible for everyone!

Gramps: Well, maybe you're right. Everyone has to take care of themselves.

- Faith:** Excuse me, ma'am. Did I hear you say that Jesus was looking for food to share?
- Granny:** Yes, they are asking well-prepared people to give up their own food to take care of the people who did not look ahead and prepare their own lunch for themselves.
- Faith:** Well, I don't have much, but my mom did packed me five loaves of barley bread and two fish. Do you think Jesus would want that?
- Granny:** Now that's a nice thought dear but your mom packed that lunch for you. She wouldn't want you to be hungry because you gave your food away. Now why don't you sit down here with us and I'll make sure those young men with Jesus don't bother you anymore.
- Faith:** Thank you ma'am, but I think that I'll offer what I can to Jesus. I'm sure I won't go hungry, Jesus will be fair.
- Gramps:** I think that's a very nice thought young lady. Why don't you take my share of this lunch with you. Every little bit will help.
- Granny:** Oh no you don't Gramps. You're not going to give my good food away.
- Faith:** Excuse me, I think I'll go find that man that was asking for food.

(Faith goes over to Andrew and offers him her lunch. Andrew takes Faith to Jesus).

- Narrator:** Jesus took the bread, gave thanks to God, and distributed it to the people who were sitting there. He did the same with the fish, and they all had as much as they wanted.

SCENE 2r: 2 Cents-a-Meal Goes a Long Way

Characters: Beaugard (a young boy)

Faith (a young girl)

Props: a jar of pennies off to the side

Setting: Faith enters humming a tune. Beaugard enters right behind her.

Beaugard: Hey Faith, you want to go to McDonald's with me? They're having a "2 Quarter-Pounders for 2 Bucks" sale and I just happen to have two bucks! I'll even treat you if you'll spring for the french fries.

Faith: I'd love to go Beaugard, but I don't know if I have enough money. Here, Let me check.
(Faith looks down as if she's searching for money in a drawer or purse)

Beaugard: Hey Faith, here's a whole jar full of money!

Faith: Naw, that's my 2-cents-a-meal money.

Beauregard: You know where you can get a meal for 2 cents?

Faith: Beauregard, that's my offering for church. We have a special offering that we take up once a quarter to help fight world hunger. We call it 2-cents-a-meal because we are supposed to put two pennies in the jar for each meal we eat. I keep that jar out on the counter so it will remind me to help contribute to those who don't have enough to eat.

Beauregard: But I'm one of those who doesn't have enough to eat. And if you don't find any more money, what's it gonna hurt if you take some of those pennies. It's not like anybody is actually counting how much you give.

Faith: I'm counting! Besides, that's my small way of helping. Two center per meal is not very much, but when my two cents is added to someone else's two cents and that is added to someone else's two cents, then it can really make a difference.

Beauregard: Yeah, like adding your money to mine so that we can go to McDonald's! I'm hungry.

Faith: Beauregard, when did you last eat?

Beauregard: About....uh....15...no 20 minutes ago. Hey, no wonder I'm hungry all I had was two candy bars a whole 20 minutes ago!

Faith: Beauregard, you ate two candy bars just 20 minutes ago and you're hungry again for a full meal at McDonalds? Did you know that in one year alone, about 30 million people die from starvation? That's as many people as live in New York City, London and Tokyo combined! And you're worried about one lunch at McDonalds!

Beauregard: Thirty million people you say?

Faith: Thirty million people.

Beauregard: Well, you little jar of pennies isn't going to save 30 million people you know.

Faith: No, my little jar of pennies won't, but last year the 2-Cents-a-Meal offering in our Presbytery amounted to over \$115,000! Now that's enough to help a few people who are hungry. And besides, every little bit helps even two pennies a meal.

Beauregard: Well, I guess that means no McDonalds for lunch.

Faith: I've got a good idea. Why don't I make us a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and you donate your two bucks for the 2-Cents-a-Meal offering?

Beauregard: Two bucks, not let me see....at 2-cents-per-meal, 2 dollars would account for 100 meals and that would take me...

Faith: If you ate 3 meals a day, that would amount to 33 and 1/3 days worth.

Beauregard: Three meals a day? Who eats three meals a day? Try eight meals a day.

Faith: Oh Beauregard, what am I going to do with you?

(Both exit)

SCENE 3r: Collecting Food

Characters: Beauregard

Faith

Gramps

Granny

Props: Grocery bag

Can of food (empty will be more manageable)

Setting: Faith is humming to herself as Beauregard enters.

Faith: Hi Beauregard, Would you like to come along and help me with this month's canned food drive?

Beauregard: Do we get food to eat?

Faith: Sure, we will be collecting canned and boxed foods for our local food bank distribution.

Beauregard: No, I asked if WE get food to eat.

Faith: Oh, no Beauregard, this is collecting food for the hungry.

Beauregard: But I'm hungry.

Faith: Beauregard, you're always hungry! But seriously, don't you know that every Saturday, our local food bank hands out over 140 bags of groceries to people in our community that don't have enough to eat?

Beauregard: 140 bags! Do you have to collect that much? And besides, don't these people have food stamps or something to buy their groceries with like everybody else?

Faith: Sure, some of them do get food stamps, but food stamps don't go very far when you have a whole family to feed.

Beauregard: 140 bags. That sure is a lot of food. How much are you going to collect today?

Faith: Well, I thought that I would just go door to door until I had 2 or 3 bags full of food. I know it's not much, but it's the least I can do. Look, I already started the first bag with a contribution of my own.

Beauregard: Soup, green beans, dried beans, carrots...wow, you sure do have a lot of cans in there.

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Faith: Well, I want to make a difference in the world and what better place to start than in my own community. Now, come on if you want to help.

Beauregard: Count me in, I can sniff out food from a mile away.

(Faith and Beauregard go to Granny's house)

(Doorbell rings and Granny appears)

Granny: Well, hello kids. What can I do for you today?

Faith: We are going around the neighborhood asking people to donate canned goods to our local food bank ministry. Would you be willing to donate a few cans?

Granny: Food for the food bank you say? Well, let's see...I have some old dented cans of turnip greens that I don't really like they were on sale in the "Reject bin" and I picked them up....sure, you can have them.

(Granny disappears to get cans)

Beauregard: Turnip greens! Rejects! Hey, this is not much fun.

Faith: Maybe we'll do better at the next house.

(Granny returns)

Granny: Here's one can. They don't need all that much, so you can give them this one. I'm using the others to hold down the newspaper that the paperboy got wet this morning. I don't know why he can't throw it on the porch instead of the mud puddle.

Faith: Well...uh...thank you. We'll add it to the rest.

Granny: Yes, you do that and I hope that they appreciate the free handout. I can't believe that they have a child out collecting food! *(Her voice trails off and Granny disappears)*

Beauregard: Wow, I didn't know that people could be so insensitive. Why, she didn't even care about the people that she was helping. They didn't ask to be hungry and I'm sure that they are not proud of it. One can of dented greens...

Faith: Beauregard, we can't judge people and their motives, we just have to move on and do the best we can. Here's another house, let's try it.

(doorbell rings and Gramps appears)

Gramps: Well, look who's on my doorstep. Why, it's a pretty little girl and a very important looking young man.

Beauregard: Yes sir, and we are on a very important mission. We are here collecting canned food for the

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local food bank ministry and would like to add you donation to our bag.

Gramps: What a wonderful ministry that two such fine looking missionaries would be involved in! As it so happens, I just came home from the grocery store and my pantry is too full to hold it all. Let me go and see what I can find that the people would enjoy eating (Gramps disappears)

Beauregard: See Faith, it just takes the right kind of approach to get people to see the need.

Faith: Maybe it just takes the right kind of people.

Beauregard: Well, it helps to notice what kind of “Upstanding young people” such as ourselves are doing the asking too!

Faith: Oh Beauregard, give it a break.

(Gramps returns with a full grocery bag)

Gramps: Here you go. I couldn't decide which they would like better, so I just decided to fill up a bag of my favorites. Do you think that would be okay?

Beauregard: I think that would be great! The food bank will be excited to see so many choice selections. And look Faith, the cans aren't even dented!

Gramps: What?

Faith: Never mind. Thank you sir for being so generous.

Gramps: Maybe I could do more.

Beauregard: All right! Two bags! And at my first house.

Gramps: Actually, I was thinking that I could help you take this bag to the food bank and even help with the distribution.

Faith: That would be great, they are always needing extra Baggers and Carriers to help on Saturdays. And we would love you help with this heavy bag.

Gramps: It's settle then. Let me get my coat.

Beauregard: Say Faith, this has turned out to be a wonderful day. We're helping to fight hunger in our community and meeting some pretty terrific people in the process.

(All exit together)

SONG: Oh Lord, I Thank You.

SCENE 4: Animals can make a difference

Characters: Pig, Cow, Sheep, Fish, Rabbit

Setting: The pig enters first and is joined by the other animals one by one as their lines come up.

Pig: You can make a difference,
They told me to say,
So off to Mexico
I went one day.

And settled there
in a brand new home.
With lots of mud
for me to roam.

My little piglets
were born down there.
All pink and wrinkled
with not much hair.

Up for adoption
my piglets all went,
To wait for the day
when they all could be sent.

They were raised by a youth club
until full grown,
Sows and boars
having families of their own.

You can make a difference
you'll hear me say
Feeding hungry people
a thousand miles away.

Cow: You can make a difference
I'm here to tell
Giving cows like me
with milk to sell.

We graze and graze
and get real fat,
With plenty of milk
now how about that!

So I moved away
to Cameroon
Where my little calf
would be coming soon.

For each new spring
I've a calf to share.
And now and again
I've even a pair.

The cycle goes on
for now you see
Calves grow up
into cows like me.

Giving milk and beef
for the hungry to eat,
makes a big difference
for the ones we meet.

You can make a difference,
you'll hear me say,
Feeding hungry people,
a thousand miles away.

Sheep: You can make a difference
they tell us sheep,
Making wool blankets
so all can sleep.

So off to the mountains
I went one day,
To graze and grow
while my little ones play.

My lambs grow quickly
and outgrow me,
With nice thick coats
for all to see.

One lamb's wool
goes a long, long way
Making several ponchos
for a cold winter's day.

And as for me,
well I feel real proud.
So I'll stand up tall
and BA-AH real loud.

You can make a difference,
You'll hear me say
Feeding hungry people
A thousand miles away.

Fish: You can make a difference
swimming here and there.
Stocking ponds and rivers
for people who care.

All my little fishies
swim to and fro
Laughing and playing
and starting to grow.

Looking for some minnows
Or maybe plant food
Going off to school
in a great big brood.

Feeding lots of hungry fook
is what we do best
Giving them nutrition
for work and play and rest.

You can make a difference
you'll hear me say
Helping hungry people
a thousand miles away.

Rabbit:

You can make a difference
they want me to tell
Selling pelts for fur coats
it works quite well.

Hipping and hopping
and wiggling our nose

Making baby bunnies
for market we suppose.

It only takes us ten weeks
to grow up big and strong
So we can have our own kids
in not so very long.

Filling up the hutches
with lots of little ones
So there'll be lots of fur
when market time comes.

Bringing hope to hungry folk
that's what it's all about
And we're just glad to be a part
of many helping out.

You can make a difference
you'll hear me say
Helping feed the hungry

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a thousand miles away.

All: A circle full of animals
dance around the earth
Bringing hope and help to all
with joyous smiles and mirth.

A circle full of animals
giving all they can
Helping feed the hungry
every woman, child, and man.

A herd-full, a pen-full
an ark-full at best
Giving up their very lives
with energy and zest.

You can make a difference,
we're all here to say
Helping hungry people
a thousand miles away.
RAP: (to Deck the Halls)

Serving God is a snap * *
Serving God is a snap * *
There's really nothing to it,
Even we can do it.
Serving God is a snap * *
Yes, serving God is a snap * *

There are people in the land who need a helping hand
Jesus said to Help them that was his command.

(Sing) Feed the hungry, clothe the naked
Fa-la-la-la-la-, la-la-la-la

Picking up the canned goods, packing up the food,
Helping out the hungry is what we gotta do.

Trying very hard to get everything done,
makes us feel good to serve God's Son.

Serving God is a snap * *
Serving God is a snap * *
There's really nothing to it,
Even we can do it.
Serving God is a snap * *
Yes, serving God is a snap * *

Serving God is easy, of that there is no doubt,

And when we save our pennies, it's the poor we're helping out.

So when we save just 2-cents-a meal,
Add it all together and we've got a great deal!

Your cents, my cents, put them all together,
We can make our world a whole lot better.

So save those pennies and don't get bored,
Cause when you save, you're serving the Lord!

Serving God is a snap * *
Serving God is a snap * *
There's really nothing to it,
Even we can do it.
Serving God is a snap * *
Yes, serving God is a snap * *

Some raise cattle or oxen or sheep
To give to people they'll never ever meet.

Eggs from the chickens and milk from the goats,
Nice fluffy outfits from the ram's old coat.

Fish that swim in the pond all day,
Bees making honey that sure will pay.

Animals helping any way they can,
People to survive, every woman and man.

What can we do? You might well ask.
JUST LEARN OUR SONG WILL BE YOUR FIST TASK.

Serving God is a snap * *
Serving God is a snap * *
There's really nothing to it,
Even we can do it.
Serving God is a snap * *
Yes, serving God is a snap * *

Yes, serving God is a * * Snap!

* denotes the snap of your fingers

Scripture as Story:

Instead of one person reading this text, we invite you to animate the Word of God using people from your congregation. This readers theater is based on John 9, NRSV. You will need: Narrator, Jesus, disciples, man born blind, up to five neighbors, up to four Pharisees, mother, and father.

Narrator: As Jesus walked along, he saw a man blind from birth.

Disciples: Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?

Jesus: Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world I am the light of the world. (*Bends to scoop up dirt, spits (audibly!), kneads his hands, and spreads them over blind man's face. Says to him*) Go, wash in the pool of Siloam.

Narrator: Then he went and washed and came back able to see. The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar raised questions.

Neighbor 1: Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?

Neighbors 2 & 3: (nodding) It is he.

Neighbors 4 & 5: (shaking their heads) No, but it is someone like him.

The man: (repeats over and over) I AM THE MAN.

Neighbors: (repeat at least three times) Then how were you eyes opened?

The man: The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, "Go to Siloam and wash." Then I went and washed and received my sight.

Neighbors: Where is he?

The man: I do not know.

Narrator: The neighbors brought the man who had formerly been blind to the Pharisees. Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Then the Pharisees also began to ask the man how he had received his sight.

The man: He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see. (Steps aside or turns his back to the congregation.)

Pharisee 1: This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath.

Pharisee 2: How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?

Pharisee 3: (to man) What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened.

The man: He is a prophet.

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- Narrator:** People would not believe that he had been blind until they called his parents.
- Pharisee 4:** Is this you son, who you say was born blind? How then does he see now?
- Mother:** We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind, but we do not know how it is that he now sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes.
- Father:** Ask him, he is of age. He will speak for himself.
- Narrator:** So for the second time they called the man who had been blind.
- Pharisee 2:** Give glory to God!
- Pharisee 1:** We know that this man is a sinner.
- The man:** I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.
- Pharisee 3:** What did he do to you?
- Pharisee 4:** (jumps in on last word of Pharisee 3) How did he open your eyes?
- The man:** I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?
- Pharisees:** (tumbling into one another's words)
- 1:** You are his disciple.
- 2:** We are disciples of Moses.
- 3:** We know that God has spoken to Moses.
- 4:** As for this man, we do not know where he comes from.
- The man:** Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.
- Pharisee 1:** You were born entirely in sin...
- Pharisee 2:** ...and are you trying to teach us???
- The man:** (turns back to congregation once again)
- Narrator:** Jesus heard that they had driven the man out, and when he found him, he said to him:
- Jesus:** Do you believe in the Son of Man?
- The man:** (turns toward congregation) And who is he, sir? Tell me, that I may believe in him.
- Jesus:** You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he.

The man: Lord, I believe.

Jesus: I came into this world for judgement so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.

Narrator: Some of the Pharisees near him heard this.

Pharisee 3: Surely we are not blind...

Pharisee 4: ...are we?

Jesus: If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, "We see," your sin remains.

SHARING FOOD IN A HUNGRY WORLD

Introduction: This simulation will demonstrate, in a simple way, the relationship between distribution of people and food in the global setting. It will take 20 to 25 minutes.

Materials:

World Map, Bread, large uncut loaf such as French bread, Litany copies (Sharing Food in a Hungry World)

Advance Preparation:

Duplicate litanies.

Procedure:

On the world map, pint out the five most populated continents: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Explain that most of the people living where they do were born there and did not choose where to be born, just as the people in the group did not have that choice.

Divide the group into these continents by percentage of population. (For groups of 10, 25, and 40, the number in each continent is given below.)

Total Group		10	25	40
Africa	12%	1	3	5
Asia	58%	6	14-15	23
Europe	16%	1-2	4	6-7
North America	6%	1	1-2	2-3
South America	8%	1	2	3

Hold up the loaf of uncut bread and explain that it represents all the food which will be eaten today in the world. Then divide the loaf according to the percentages eaten on the five continents and give the pieces to one person in each group.

Africa	8%
Asia	23%
Europe	36%
North America	22%
South America	11%

Hand out the "Sharing Food in a Hungry World" litany and read, with continents responding.

Instruct the five continents to feed their people. They might give the same portion to everyone, or be more realistic and give larger pieces to the ones who are deemed rich and no bread to some others, the poor. Continents without much bread may try to get bread from others. Encourage discussion within and between continents. Tell them not to eat the bread until after the simulation.

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It is possible to make the game more complex by giving cards with names of resources and products written on them for trade, or let them think of products and resources from the continents. The supplied list might include:

Africa - cocoa, coffee, uranium

Asia - jute, bamboo, clothing

Europe - watches, wine

North America - weapons, food

South America - tin, bananas, coffee

End by asking all participants to holdup their piece of bread. Point out that the actions and feelings which were happening in the simulation are also happening in the continents. There may be positive happenings in Asia, for example, such as a sense of community in their struggle. End with discussion.

Source: Experiencing More With Less, Meredith Sommers Dregni, Herald Press, Scottdale, PA 15983.

Sharing Food in a Hungry World Skit

- Leader:** The earth is the Lord's. The Lord created the world and all who dwell therein.
- All:** We are the people of the major continents of the world. We love life and offer praise to the Lord of our lives. Let every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball, to God all majesty ascribe and crown Lord of all.
- Leader :** Praise be to God, the Lord of all the peoples of earth.
- Africa:** We are a continent filled with beauty and promise, pain and poverty. We yearn to be free.
- Asia:** Burdened with masses of hungry people, we cry for the bread of heaven and the bread of earth.
- Europe:** Once mighty in the eyes of the world, and now the most densely populated of the continents, we seek economic stability.
- South America:** Rapidly growing in people and poverty, we look to our neighbors to the north, east, and west.
- North America:** We are on top of the world. We possess many things, and yet we are anxious about our dependence upon the exports of the rest of the world to maintain our consumptive lifestyle.
- All Continents:** Praise be to God, the Lord of all the peoples of the earth.
- Leader:** How did you get where you are? By choice? No, by chance. This is true of the inhabitants of the world. How many of you are there on your continent?
- Africa:** Twelve percent of the people.
- Asia:** Fifty-eight percent of the people.
- Europe:** Sixteen percent of the people.
- South America:** Eight percent of the people.
- North America:** Six percent of the people.
- Leader:** Do you people earn enough to have enough to eat, to eat well?
- Africa:** Our twelve percent of the world's people eat eight percent of the world's food.
- Asia:** Our fifty-eight percent of the world's people eat twenty-three percent of the world's food.
- Europe:** Our sixteen percent of the world's people eat thirty-six percent of the world's food.
- South America:** Our eight percent of the world's people eat eleven percent of the world's food.

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North America: Our six percent of the world's people eat twenty-two percent of the world's food.

Leader: This unequal distribution is the cause of the malnourishment and starvation in God's world and it should be the concern of all Christians. What can we do?

All: Perhaps the nations that have more than enough food will share with those who don't have enough. Perhaps businesses can help developing countries solve their own problems by sharing technology and resources. Perhaps churches can give more to help hungry people help themselves. Perhaps we all can make decisions to help our hungry world help itself.

To Build A Better World

The following intergenerational skit is a contemporary parable about affirming the variety of gifts in the human condition as well as about working with mission partners to create meaningful and lasting change. It can be used as a church school play, in worship, or in a special One Great Hour of Sharing event. It is designed to be used as simply or as elaborately as you wish. Props can be created easily: cardboard cutouts for both the hilly land landscape, the truck, and the beams. A hard hat and tool kit can identify the builder; a pocket protractor and T-square the engineer; a baseball cap the child; a color palette and beret the artist, and a basket full of colorful cloths the old woman.

Despite a serious underlying message, the skit is broadly drawn, like a cartoon. Have fun with it! Don't overlook the use of humor and exaggeration in acting, characterizations, costumes, and sets. Remember, we all learn valuable lessons while at play.

In a more serious vein, a question-and-answer period might be appropriate after the skit. Some discussion starters include:

1. What are the most important points of the story? What do they have to do with One Great Hour of Sharing?
2. What mistakes did the flatlanders make as they tried to help the old woman? How is this similar to mistakes we sometimes make when we try to help others? Have you ever felt like the old woman must have felt in this story? Can we learn lessons from this that we can apply to other relationships, e.g., parent and child, congregation and community?
3. What made you laugh? Why?
4. Why do you think the child was the first to believe the flatlanders should listen to the old woman? Does the exchange between the woman and child remind you of any biblical texts?
5. The flatlanders mistook the woman's cloths for rags. Have you ever considered something to be of no value, even though it was important to someone else?
6. What can we learn from neighbors who have fewer material possessions than we do? How can we apply this learning in our highly complicated society?

Characters:

Storyteller, Truck Driver, Old Woman, Builder Engineer, Child, Artist

Placer: A hillside near the border between flatlands and hilly land.

Storyteller: Once upon a time, the world was divided into two places—flatlands and hilly land. The people from flatlands were prosperous while the people from hilly land always seemed to have bad luck. Forces of nature pelted hilly land with rain. Strong winds eroded the soil until it was hard to grow food. Hilly land people were poor and lived simple lives.

One day a group of flatlanders set out in a truck to try to help the people from hilly land -- a builder with a strong back; an artist who could create beautiful things; a brilliant engineer; the truck driver, and a child.

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On reaching hilly land, the group noticed an old woman who had many pieces of cloth tied onto a large basket she carried on her back.

Builder: Ma'am, why do you have so many rags?

Woman: These cloths are like friends. They protect me from the cold and fill in corners when the wind blows. They sop up water after the rain to use for cooking and cleaning, and they make colorful costumes for festival days.

Engineer: (Aside) Look like rags to me.

Woman: Not everything is as it appears.

Engineer: Perhaps, but the laws of math and science are universal . . . and those rags look universally useless.

Woman: You must be from flatlands.

Artist: Yes, we have heard that things are not well here. We've come to help.

Woman: Here we are grateful for small blessings. We know about the riches in flatlands, and at times we envy you, but we have a resourcefulness we think you've overlooked in your land. Still, I appreciate your concern.

Builder: Where is your house?

Woman: I use this lean-to during the rainy season. But I am often on the road. Then this basket, a few utensils and these cloths are all I need.

Builder: (Aghast) Are there others who live like you?

Woman: Many people live like me.

(The flatlanders gasp and speak among themselves, everyone talking at once) "No homes . . . how can this be . . . these few possessions . . . poor thing . . . the people here must really be suffering." They then huddle together. The woman is oblivious to their concern. She sorts through her cloths and ties a bright bandana around her head.

Builder: *(To the others)* These people are truly in need. We are wealthy by comparison. Perhaps we could build homes for them. We have the resources and the experience. We can help them.

Engineer: Good idea! I can design the structure.

Driver: I can haul the materials.

Artist : I can make it beautiful.

Child: And I can bring some toy cars and trucks for the little ones to play with.

Builder: *(To the woman)* We will build houses for you and your people to live in

so that you'll be protected from the elements and your children will have a safe, secure place to grow up.

Woman: I'm not sure that a house is what I need, but I'm grateful for your kindness. Beware, though. Things here aren't like on flatlands. Get to know our land and our people or your ideas won't work.

Engineer: Nonsense, woman. The laws of science and math are universal. If a building works on flatlands, it will work on hilly land.

(The woman smiles, but says nothing.)

Storyteller: The small band returns to flatlands to gather their materials. Soon they return and set about their task.

Engineer: Woman, we have returned to begin building your house.

Woman: Before you start, there is something you may want to know . . .

Storyteller: The woman is interrupted as the truck starts sliding down the hill. In flatlands there is no need for brakes strong enough to hold a heavy load in hilly land.

Driver: *(calling out, as the truck slides back.)* My truck! I can't keep it still! I'll have to let it roll down and then accelerate back uphill. I'll have to stay in the cab the whole time, so you'll have to unload without me.

Woman: But if you . . .

Builder: Sorry ma'am, we have no time to listen. But we'll be done in no time—even with this inconvenience.

Storyteller: The woman sighs and sits down to watch as the group begins to build. However, try as they might, the house will not go up straight. The uneven terrain keeps the beams from connecting properly.

Builder: *(exasperated)* I'm at a loss. *(To the engineer.)* Your design is wrong for this place.

Engineer: What you mean my design is wrong? It's your materials that are faulty.

Artist: I'm losing patience with both of you. I won't be able to put my skills to any use at all until the house is built. It's pointless for me to be here.

Woman: Excuse me, but I have a suggestion.

Builder: With all due respect, ma'am, we're professionals. We'll fix it. *(The woman sighs and shrugs, amused at the infighting among the builders. Meanwhile, the child is watching from a hilltop, intrigued by the woman's confident humility.)*

Child: *(impatiently)* Our way doesn't seem to be working.

Artist: *(sharply)* Child, you're not helping any. Pipe down until you have something more helpful to

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say.

(This rebuke makes the child cry. The old woman comforts the child and dabs the child's eyes with one of her rags.)

Driver: *(accelerating past the group)* I'm getting pretty low on fuel!

Engineer: And I'm getting pretty low on ideas!

Artist: I'm just about out of patience!

Builder: And I'm getting pretty tired from trying to fit these beams together!

Woman: Perhaps if you tried a different approach . . .

Engineer: *(impatiently, as if tired of explaining the same thing over and over)* There's only one way to build a house. The laws of math and science are universal.

Child: *(stands up straight and says loudly)* Maybe we should listen to her. *(All turn to the child.)* Maybe she does have an idea that will work.

Builder: *(skeptically)* Okay, woman. What is it you want to say?

Woman: Our land and our way of life are different from yours. Not better or worse, just different. So you can't just bring your way of life into our land expect it to work. Solutions are simpler here. We need to be flexible. There aren't many straight lines or elaborate structures. But we can still accomplish a good bit. Watch. *(Calls to the driver.)* Drive it back up here and stop!

When the driver rolls the truck up, the woman wedges a knotted rag under the wheel of the truck. It stops rolling.

Driver: Why didn't I think of that? Now I can shut off the engine, save fuel, and help with the building.

Woman: *(to the builder)* These cloths you thought were useless can be most helpful. They mold into any shape, so they fit into odd places. Use them in the joints between the beams to even out the odd angles of our hillsides.

Builder: Amazing!

Woman: *(to the engineer)* Because they are flexible, the cloths allow the beams to move ever so slightly in the heavy winds we get in the winter. This helps the shelter last longer.

Builder: We shouldn't have come. You could have built this shelter by yourself.

Woman: Oh no, not true. We probably would never have gotten around to it. We need things like wells, roads and hospitals more than new houses. Since we can't afford to build all those things at once, it would have been a long time before we would have built any houses.

Artist: You mean we spent all this time building something you didn't even need? Why didn't you tell us; we could have been building a hospital.

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- Woman:** It's not too late to start, but you must learn to work with us, not for us. What you have is valuable, but what we have is too. Together, we can construct a better world. As an artist, you can observe our ways of working and show them to your own people in ways that they might learn from us.
- Storyteller:** So the builders complete the house, and come back in a few weeks to learn about the needs of the hillylanders, and how they can work with each other to meet those needs. By listening first, they become more effective. They even invite some hillylanders to return with them to flatlands to share their resourceful wisdom. Eventually, the old woman's words come true; together, they do construct a better world.