



The Fellowship Hour Food Stamp Challenge

Can \$1 Curb Your Hunger?

Congregational Meal Activity Leaders' Guide

To engage the whole congregation in the “Food Stamp Challenge” activity, choose one Sunday to serve sack lunches instead of coffee and pastries at fellowship hour/coffee hour. The twist? **Each sack lunch contains only the portion of a healthy meal that can be purchased with one dollar—the amount of the average per-meal, per-person Food Stamp benefit.** A suggested preparation guide can be found below.

In Advance:

Recruit several volunteers who will help prepare children’s meals, women’s meals, and men’s meals. Having a few different meal menus makes things a little complicated, but using a variety of foods helps to better illustrate the challenge of eating a balanced diet on a limited income. *If this feels too complicated, then choose just one menu and serve everyone the same.*

Decorate each lunch bag with a sticker or tag listing the menu for a healthy meal. Inside the bags, place a combination of foods that can be purchased for one dollar. **Include a card in each bag explaining which food group(s) had to be left out** to meet the one-dollar price limit.

Variation: Instead of preparing sack lunches, plan to serve food from bowls and platters, displaying the serving size and serving cost for each food. Allow people to “build their own” meals, keeping in mind the one-dollar-per-meal limit. If you go this route, people will likely choose the least expensive foods, so plan accordingly.

Take a head count during worship the week before. How many men, how many women, how many children? Use these numbers as a guideline for how many meals to prepare. If you don’t get the proportions of men, women, and children exactly right, don’t worry. Just make sure you’ll have enough lunches in total, and people will make do with what’s available. You may want to plan for a few extra meals, and identify people ahead of time who are willing to take home and use the leftovers so any extra food will not be wasted.

Go shopping for the food you’ll need and gather other necessary materials. To support local farmers, think about buying items like bread, eggs, apples, and vegetables at your local farmer’s market if you are able to do so.

Place an announcement in the bulletin the week before and **use the Fellowship Hour Food Stamp Challenge bulletin insert** the day of your event. Also make an announcement during worship.

The day of the event:

Gather your volunteers and **prepare the meals**. Don't forget to hard boil the eggs ahead of time for the children's lunches!

Place table tents with table blessings and discussion questions on each table. Also place supplies for writing letters and ELCA World Hunger offering envelopes.

Ask a worship leader or pastor to briefly explain the Food Stamp Challenge during worship and invite everyone to come to the Fellowship Hour meal.

As people enter the fellowship hall, provide a basket or offering plate to **invite each person to give as they are able to the ELCA World Hunger Appeal** to help fight hunger around the world and close to home.

Ask someone to bless the meal and briefly explain the Food Stamp Challenge.

After people have had some time for small group discussion, **invite folks to share** their thoughts with the whole group.

Have someone speak about **how to write an effective letter** to a member of Congress and what to expect when calling their members of Congress.

If pastors or lay leaders at your congregation participated in a **week-long Food Stamp Challenge**, ask them to speak to the congregation about their experiences.

After the event:

Send a photo and a short article about your event to your local paper. Include quotes from any congregation members who lived on a food stamp budget for a whole week or more. Mention several activities your congregation does to help fight hunger.

Organize and invite congregation members to **follow-up workshops or study groups** for more in-depth discussion of the Farm Bill, our church's participation in advocacy work, and our church's world hunger ministry.

Schedule a meeting with a senator or representative to encourage him/her to vote for legislation that will improve the lives of hungry people. See www.elca.org/advocacy to learn about key pieces of legislation.

What goes in the lunch bags?

In contrast to the complete, healthy meal menus listed on the bulletin inserts and lunch bag tags, the \$1 lunches contain:

Children's Meal Contents	Women's Meal Contents	Men's Meal Contents
<p>$\frac{3}{4}$ cup carrots</p> <p>$\frac{1}{2}$ orange</p> <p>Hard boiled egg</p> <p>Cup of milk</p> <p>(No peanut butter sandwich)</p>	<p>Turkey sandwich (1 slice of whole wheat bread, 2 slices of turkey)</p> <p>Cup of milk</p> <p>(No salad, no salad dressing, no apple)</p>	<p>One slice of whole wheat bread</p> <p>1 cup broccoli florets</p> <p>1 cup grapes</p> <p>(No milk, no tuna)</p>

Shopping list to prepare the suggested sack lunches:

Food:

- Whole wheat bread** (approx. one loaf for every 20 adults)
- Baby carrots or carrot sticks** (one pound for every 5 children)
- Oranges** (one orange for every 2 children, serve halves)
- Eggs** (one dozen for every 12 children, serve hard-boiled)
- Skim milk** (one gallon for every 16 women and children)
- Sliced turkey** (two slices per woman, approx. one pound for every 10 women)
- Fresh broccoli** (approx. 1 pound for every 5 men, serve cut into florets)
- Grapes** (approx. 1 pound for every 5 men)

Materials:

- Paper lunch bags** (remember to recycle!)
- Plastic sandwich bags or waxed paper** (for wrapping food portions)
- 8-oz. cups** (for milk)
- Napkins**
- Cardstock-weight paper** (for printing lunch bag tags, table tents, discussion cards)