

CONGREGATIONAL USER'S GUIDE

THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical

This Web site accompanies the script and score for the simplicity musical, "The Race." In these Web pages you'll find helps for using this musical in your congregation's hunger work, as well as promoting emphases in stewardship and family life. Enjoy what you read, and may others be blessed by what you do!

About the Musical

THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical is the story of Dave, single parent and hard-working mid-level manager at Biggins and Rude, a large international conglomerate. As might be expected, Dave's rise to the top brings him into tension with his family, his co-workers, his core values and his future. Unexpectedly, though, Dave's questions are sharpened by the appearance of Lily, an old friend from college. In the end, Dave makes hard choices that slow him down but bring new qualities to his life.

Specifications:

- 75-minutes in length
- 8 scenes, 6 songs (with variations and reprises)
- Script and score, in both print and digital editions
- CD with vocal and accompaniment tracks
- Instrumental parts and conductor's score (both print and digital editions)
- Performance notes (both print and digital editions)
- Minimum cast requirements: Six key players plus three or four extras
- Maximum casting possibilities: Eleven actors plus small chorus of extras
- Minimum instrumental requirements: None (Use accompaniment tracks on CD)
- Maximum instrumental possibilities: Eight instrumentalists, children's choir and/or chorus.

Promotional Materials

Use these files to construct the publicity materials you need to invite and inform your congregation about the musical.

Bulletin Insert: Announcement

Bulletin Insert: Casting Call

Program Cover

Poster

Newsletter Copy: Announcement
Postcard Reminder
Ticket
Clip Art: Title
Clip Art: COMING SOON
Clip Art: Clock
Clip Art: Running Dave

Sound Effects and Visuals

Click on the files here to find sound effects and visuals to supplement the script and score. NOTE: These are the same sound effects and visuals included in the Digital Edition.

Congregational Tools

Click on any of the links here to find tools that take “simple living” to deeper and broader importance in your congregation. Some of the tools help you start a program; others insert simplicity into what programs already exist. Still other tools just help you talk together. All of the tools can precede or follow a performance of THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical.

Taking a gut check

For a few moments, stop running – like Dave or his treadmill buddies -- and settle down to some intuitive thinking. Grab a cup of coffee, tea or other refreshments; sit with a couple of leaders in your congregation and take a “gut check” that assesses your feelings about the present state of the world. This may be a good thing for all of you, especially if you’ve been “Sunday polite” with each other for so long that you actually believe that everyone’s just fine except you!

Take some time to get beyond moaning and groaning, and talk honestly about matters such as these:

- What will be the state of the environment or the economy five years from now?
- What kind of world will your children live in when they’re your age?
- What’s pushing you to live in ways that aren’t really working very well?
- How often do you say to yourselves, “Things just can’t keep going on this way?”
- What’s broken and isn’t getting fixed?
- Who’s secretly living simply because they have no other economic choice?
- Who do you know that’s downshifted or downsized? How’s it working out?
- What’s missing in the way you live?
- What are you afraid of? Why?

If evidence—statistics, stories, pictures, reports—is helpful alongside your intuition, talk about that, too. (A good question to start the accumulation of factual matter: “How do you know?”) But don’t turn this conversation into a head trip that deteriorates into arguments about accuracy or authority. What you’re after here is a sharing of feelings, so that you can see together the interior parts of your brain. So you can see how each of you is thinking about the thousands of decisions that comprise your lifestyle.

If you want to formalize this process, keep track of what you learn from each other, then form some more coffee-conversation groups and go through the same questions. Pretty soon you’ll accumulate a lot of good thinking. Look at your notes and see the patterns—repeated ideas, connections, causes-and-effects. If you’re willing to ask “What should we do next?” you’re ready to take the first action steps toward a congregation program.

If not, don’t worry. You still have the rest of your life to figure this out!

Bible conversation guide: Worry warts

Matthew 6:25-34

Key concepts

1. As a way of thinking, unhelpful worry received a lot of Jesus' attention.
2. God's natural world has some lessons to teach us.
3. Only life's most basic necessities are talked about here.

Background

In his famous "Sermon on the Mount" Jesus treats extensively the subjects of worry, anger, prayer and blessedness. The lesson and the implied invitation are clear: Stop worrying because worry gains you nothing. Even fears about not having enough of life's most basic needs aren't helpful.

Items for discussion or sharing

1. If Jesus had been talking to rich people like the musical's hero, Dave or us –instead of his poverty-stricken peasant class audience–what thoughts might he have added to this sermon?
2. What other lessons about worry (and contentment) might you learn from the natural world?
3. What's the opposite of worry?
4. Talk about the physiological and emotional results of protracted or widespread worry.
5. How do fear and worry complement or strengthen each other?
6. How might you say "Don't worry" to someone whose life has been filled with danger, despair or depression? (How did Lily approach the subject?)
7. Talk about the relationship of "simple living" to the concepts in these verses.

Activities and next steps

1. On the Web find current measures or standards of "happiness" and its components. Talk about your research with others.
2. Use any Web search engine tool to find a list of currently identifiable phobias–fears with names. What patterns do you notice?
3. As an act of repentance, write the names of your worrisome fears (or fearsome worries) on slips of paper. As a sign of God's forgiveness, place them in a fireplace or campfire and watch them burn to nothingness.

4. Tell stories of worry-moments that turned out to be harmful or silly. Listen for patterns in the stories and talk about them with each other.
5. Sing or listen to the musical's "What Do They Want From Me" and answer Dave's questions as though you were talking with him. What IS he worried about?

Stimulating Bible references

Directions: Use this list of sometimes-surprising Scriptural references as the basis for personal devotions and important conversations.

Bible passage	Possible topics for exploration
Deuteronomy 14:22-29	The three surprising tithes
1 Kings 17:8-16	Starvation stopped
Job 8:20-22	What goes around comes around
Psalms 130	Hitting the bottom
Psalms 144	Happy people
Ecclesiastes 1:2	“Vanity” as a motivation for materialism
Ecclesiastes 3:1-14	What time <i>is</i> it, really?
Ecclesiastes 5:11	A definition of “more” and its effects
Ecclesiastes 5:18-20	The enjoyment of God’s good gifts
Joel 2:12-13	Reasons for repentance
Amos 8:4-10	God’s punishment for economic injustice
Matthew 23:1-12	Leadership in religious matters
John 7:1-7	The loneliness of a lifestyle leader
John 20:30-31	True life because of faith in Jesus
Acts 2:43-47	Life in the early church
2 Corinthians 8:9	The selfless life of Jesus
2 Corinthians 9:8	Good works from abundant capabilities
Colossians 3:10-17	The new person in each of us
James 1:9-11	Poor people and rich people
1 Peter 4:1-11	Being faithful to God
Revelation 3:14-22	A letter to a church not unlike yours

Simplicity starter vocabulary

Directions: Use these words and phrases as subject matter for prayers, small group sharing, poetry and letter-writing. Make concept maps by grouping words and phrases into “families”; find photos and advertisements that illustrate these words and phrases; build bulletin boards around these concepts.

Avarice	Contentment	Displeasure
Fear of death	Shopping addiction	Generosity
Information overload	Giving away one’s life	Sense of entitlement
Poverty of spirit	Joy in simplicity	The mind of Christ
The way of the cross	Brain’s pleasure center	Peer pressure
More	Sufficiency	Ebullience
Enough	Celebrate	Suffer
Hermit	Gratitude	Small and beautiful
Death by slow degree	Materialism	Over-extended
Overweight	Unburdened	Guilt
One’s lot in life	Pay now or pay later	Truth wins out
Giving and receiving	Living with less	Living with more
Godly	Self-sacrifice	Rewards
Grace	Sinful nature	God will provide
Fear of running out	Hoarding	Speed kills
Overkill	McMansions	Living beyond one’s means
Television programs	Fast food	Fast cars
Smell the flowers	Toxic lifestyle	Voluntary simplicity
Forced simplicity	Blessing	Dying with the most toys
Stewardship	Career goals	Promotion
Taste and see that the Lord is good		

Barriers to simple living

Directions: Use this list of simple ideas as a way to start conversations in a group interested in lifestyle matters. Each sentence or idea might represent a thought, feeling or activity that gets in the way of God's people living joyfully and with contentment. Perhaps you can add to the list.

1. As soon as I get enough money to live on, I'll start being generous.
2. Get what you can get while you can get it.
3. The Lord helps those who help themselves.
4. What right do you have in judging how I should live my life?
5. There's nothing wrong with being comfortable, is there?
6. Simple living is too hard to think about right now. Maybe later, okay?
7. I really enjoy shopping; it makes me feel good about myself.
8. My lifestyle comes as a reward for my hard work in life; I deserve it.
9. It's a free country.
10. All this church wants is money; that's all the pastor talks about.
11. It's my money; I earned it and I'll do with it what I want to.
12. I work hard for the sake of my children.
13. I'm a good person down deep.
14. Slow down? And watch everyone else pass me by?
15. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.
16. You want me to change my way of living? Why? What good would it do?
17. _____
18. _____

Our days are numbered
A sermon starter for Lent
Psalm 90

Use these thoughts and your text study to construct a sermon related to lifestyle education during Lent.

During Lent we face the ominous prospect that our sinfulness is the cause not only of Christ's suffering and death, but also of the pain and suffering in the world. Because that sinful state extends throughout the days and stages of our lives, we are called to continual confession and forgiveness. Psalm 90 summarizes one of the major cycles of Christian living: Confession/forgiveness/renewal. This lively and self-reinforcing sequence shows up in the progression of this psalm's ideas, perhaps summarized in the activity of "numbering our days." In *THE RACE: A Musical*, the hero, Dave, has trouble figuring out how to do that stock-taking.

If our days are numbered—life is short—then we take account of them, grateful for a cherished commodity: time. If we number our days to view their progress, we may be able to count improvements. If we count our days as evidence of God's daily grace, we'll thank God for the world and the work we do in it. We may even slow down enough to see each day as a collection of blessings and opportunities.

Time and effort go into the counting of our days, if only that it takes time to measure what God accomplishes through us. It takes time to evaluate our stewardship of days. It takes time to break through shallow assessments and to get to the core of the matter: As both sinners and saints we owe what we are to a God whose ageless ways are full of grace.

This is a good time to number our days so that we will use wisely the time God gives us.

Children's sermon thoughts

Using a number of calendars, engage several children in an actual counting of the days of their life. Page through the calendar pages, showing children how 365 days comprise one year. Pile up or page through several calendars to show how many days a 4 ½ year old or 6 year old might have lived. Ask questions that help children think about the way they've spent those days, such as:

- How many really “good days” have you had? Not-so-good days?
- On how many days have you been kind to other people?
- On how many days have you been happy about God?
- How many days have you spent eating? Sleeping? Thinking important thoughts? Laughing? Crying?
- How many days do you hope to stay alive, and what do you hope you’ll be doing during those days?
- What’s it mean “to be thankful one day at a time?”

Why work?

A sermon starter for Labor Day

Ecclesiastes 2

Use these thoughts and your text study to prepare a simple-living sermon that you might preach on or around Labor Day.

For workers and bosses alike, today's the day when the intrinsic benefits of work are extolled. God's people in the church think differently about this matter than most of the characters in *THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical*, whose mindless rushing through "work" leaves them incapable of perhaps-more-important "lifework." The church also takes a slightly different tack on the subject than does the writer of Ecclesiastes, that dour fellow! In contemporary versions of Solomon's wisdom, we understand that God's work—or God's mission—is engaged meaningfully by God's people when they understand that their vocations (or callings) contribute to God's will in many ways. They're getting God's work done, whatever they do and wherever they do it, paid or unpaid.

Ask your hearers to think of God's viewpoint, with God wanting to get things done—creating and sustaining the world, keeping evil in its place, redeeming people from death and its ugly relatives, making good and holy what otherwise would have gone bad. God thinks, "I'll get my will accomplished through my people who live and work in the world." God's people think: "The part of God's good and gracious will that I help make possible is . . ." Both God and God's people rejoice in their shared work.

Children's sermon idea

Using an oscillating fan and some feathers or leaves, engage children in some "wind-chasing." Make sure they see that the effort is nearly useless. Then engage them in this series of questions, until children run out of logical-sequential answers:

- Why do people work? (*To get money*)
- Why do they need money? (*To buy things*)
- Why do they need to buy things? (*Answers will vary, among them some variations on "To be happy."*)
- What's "be happy" mean? (*Answers will vary, probably ending the stream of logic*)
Suggest that "being happy" may be like wind-chasing, and a kind of ultimate futility. Tell children that another answer to your first question might be, "To do what God wants to get done." Give some child-friendly examples, and finish the children's

sermon by commending children for the work they do—in their families, with friends,
at school—to fulfill God's will for the world.

Having food and clothing

A sermon starter in a time of great need

Luke 12:22-34

Use these thoughts and your text study to construct a sermon related to lifestyle during a time of crisis or important decision-making.

It's inevitable—because none of us in God—that some great need will come upon us all. A calamity or tragedy or condition that threatens our wellbeing or existence, an ominous trend that becomes visible or a great and compelling sadness that grips the souls of people—all of these may be matters that seem to require worrisome activity.

According to Luke, though, God's people think and behave differently. With “death” defeated, God's providence already a proven promise and Christ's example cemented into their identities, Christians look at calamity and think differently. The key: They can put God's work first. They can give away their lives. They can let fear slide on by. They can trust God more than they trust themselves.

Another tack: What, really, is the end result of fretful, stressful living except more fear and more worry? And what good is a brain that becomes a garden for fear and anxiety? Brain scientists now know the answer to that question: None, because a stressed brain is not helpful except to fight, flee or freeze. (Look at the spoken and sung thoughts of Dave, the hero in *THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical*, to see the mind of someone stressed beyond his capability to handle work, family, life goals and genuine happiness.)

So God's people face times of great need in search of the transcendence that only God's Spirit can afford, moving past self-pity and stress towards the larger goals God has in mind for the world. By their example, they draw others towards God's saving presence. By their courage and conviction they turn great need into great opportunity.

Children's sermon idea:

Engage children in a set of questions about the value of worry. The questions might look like this, depending on the children's age:

- What do you worry about, if anything?
- What does worry feel like inside your mind?
- Do you think birds worry? (How do you know?)
- What good does it do to worry?
- What do you think Jesus thought about worry?

At that point you move to a retelling of the Bible passage, emphasizing Jesus' nature-based reasoning. Close with a prayer for courage and faith in times of great need.

So, how's life working out for you?
Discussion guide for small groups

Synopsis

This guide for a 90-minute small group session takes participants through a mini-training experience in the skill of “lifestyle conversations.”

Outcome

Participants gain skill in using lifestyle questions within earnest conversations.

Materials

Newsprint and markers

Copies of a scene from THE RACE: A Lifestyle Musical, one per participant

Activities

1. Prior to the group meeting, write the following questions on newsprint:
 - How are things going for you, really?
 - What's important to you these days?
 - What eats at your satisfaction with life?
 - What do you wish you could do more of? Less of?
2. Introduce the session by noting the power of earnest conversation. It provides encouragement, opens new ideas, assures and comforts. Engage as readers' theater one of the scenes from THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical --- Scenes 2 and 5 contrast with each other nicely – and think together about the nature of the conversation(s) and how heartfelt interaction helps or hinders the characters in the scene. Option: Tell a story about the value of conversation in changing your ways of thinking or acting. (20 minutes)
3. Shift the focus of the group's attention to group members themselves. Ask participants to unpack the meaning or importance of the questions you have written on newsprint. (20 minutes)
4. Gather participants into groups of three (two conversationalists and one observer). Ask groups to engage in an imagined conversation between two friends. Somewhere

during the conversation, they should use one or more of the questions you posted earlier. (15 minutes)

5. Debrief the conversations with these prompts: What did participants notice happening inside themselves? What would they have liked to pursue further? What seemed satisfying? What was difficult? Which question(s) seemed most to stir interest or emotion? (15 minutes)
6. In the larger group, share observations for a few moments. Ask participants what other questions might open possibilities for lifestyle change. (15 minutes)

Closing prayer

Ask for a spirit of joyful expectation about the gift of earnest conversation and the power of caring questions in helping others explore the possibility of lifestyle change.

At your service
Discussion guide for small groups

Synopsis

This guide for a 90-minute small group session provides discussion material about the ways in which our technologies influence our lifestyles.

Outcome

Participants consider both dangers and opportunities in the technologies that surround and influence them.

Materials

Two or more common items of current technology (or their symbols) (e.g., automobile, laptop computer, personal digital assistant, electric mixer, cell phone)
Newsprint and markers

Activities

1. Place one item (or its symbol) in view of all participants. Encourage discussion of the following questions. Record participants' responses on newsprint. (15 minutes)
 - What value or service does this item offer to those who use it?
 - What qualities of life does this item enable or eliminate?
 - What service does this item require – time, money, attention – in order to remain useful?
 - How could a reasonably satisfying life be lived in the absence of this item?
2. Repeat the previous activity with another item, and then note the similarities and differences between the two times of discussion. (20 minutes)
3. Return to the first item, this time thinking about the real or imagined effects of this item's manufacture, maintenance and eventual disposal or recycling. Answer questions with the wider world—for example, the environment—in mind. (20 minutes)

4. Ask for participants' personal stories about times when technologies that were supposed to make life better actually detracted from lifestyle quality. (HINT: "Lifestyle" also includes one's spiritual core.) (20 minutes)
5. Talk together about what it might take for any member of this group to live with less technology than at present. (15 minutes)

Closing prayer

Pray for wisdom beyond both blind acceptance and wholesale condemnation of technological devices and proclivities.

No other choice

Discussion guide for small groups

Synopsis

This guide for a 90-minute small group session provides activity and discussion material focused on the painful reality that many families might have no other choice but to live simply.

Outcome

Participants examine and accept the possibility of involuntary simplicity in their own and others' lives.

Materials

Writing paper and pens or pencils

Newsprint and markers

Photocopies of current newspaper articles noting any of the following:

- * Financial risk
- * Deteriorating housing market
- * Job insecurity
- * Rates of mortgage defaults, personal bankruptcies or credit card debt
- * Loss of jobs to overseas outsourcing
- * Rising cost of living

Activities

1. Referencing current news articles, introduce the topic at hand. Note that “involuntary simplicity” may increase over the next few years. Using the newsprint, compare the term with synonyms such as obligatory downshifting, running out of gas, compulsory expenditure reduction, consumer debt crisis or lifestyle forfeiture. (15 minutes)
2. Ask participants to imagine in writing the specific circumstances under which their families and they would have no choice but to begin living simply. (15 minutes)
3. Bring the group together and ask participants to share what they have written. Then ask, “If you were forced to live much more simply, what might that look like?” Record thoughts on the newsprint. (25 minutes)
4. Continue the discussion around these questions, “What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of voluntary simplicity? Involuntary simplicity? (20 minutes)

5. Ask the group to imagine a series of “advisories” for individuals close to involuntary simplicity. Record their answers on the newsprint. (10 minutes)
6. Close with general observations, noting moments of hope and satisfaction that occurred during this time together. (5 minutes)

Option

If you are using this discussion guide after a performance of THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical, adapt the questions or discussion/sharing prompts to specific characters or events in the musical, or refer to touch points in the dialogue or plot.

Closing prayer

Ask for a spirit of joy in the face of life decisions that are forced on you by circumstances you cannot control. Praise God in anticipation of adversity!

Have you read this one?
Quotes for lifestyle education

Directions: Use any of these statements or questions as quick-glance material in your congregation's newsletter, bulletin boards, invitations to programs, and letters to congregation members. Some of these may work as conversation starters, too.

What are you going to do when you finally have the most toys?

Worrying about tomorrow is devilishly ineffective.

"Sabbaths" don't happen just on Sundays.

Who have you really talked ~~at~~ with today?

Over time, speeding kills you.

We are beggars, all of us. (Attributed to Martin Luther)

Who made you god?

You aren't the only who thinks life is getting crazier.

How many ways can you say, "This is a dumb way to live."

When it comes to living well, Jesus has been there before you.

Be still and know that I am God.

Now that you know what flowers smell like, what's next?

Grabbing and hoarding are not valuable life skills.

What part of "living simply" don't you understand?

"No," "Stop" and "Enough" are the same word.

Small joys can be big joys.

Hiding behind your stuff

Youth program

Synopsis

This outline provides help in constructing a 90-minute program for a meeting of youth, directed at the question, “Who’s that hiding behind those masks?”

Outcomes

1. Participants identify possible ways in which their identities or self-worth get hidden by their possessions.
2. Participants gain courage to remove these material masks as a way of discovering or showing what and who they really are.

Biblical bases

Isaiah 44: 12-20; Matthew 23:27-28; Luke 16:15

Materials

Bibles, one per participant (preferably Contemporary English Version)

Writing paper and pens

Newsprint and markers

A selection of youth-specific artifacts, such as:

- * CDs or DVDs
- * Sports equipment or uniform
- * Money or credit cards
- * Beauty or grooming aids
- * Technological toys – iPODS, cell phones
- * In-fashion clothing or accessories
- * Car keys or new car advertisement
- * Advertisement for beer or liquor

Activities

1. Direct participants to the biblical references for silent reading, asking that they take notes about interesting or challenging ideas they find. (10 minutes)
2. Referencing the Matthew 23 and Luke 16 texts, direct participants to describe how any of these artifacts of youth culture might be “masks” to hide behind. Two questions: “What’s the mask/artifact supposed to show about its owner or user?” and “What might *really* be hiding behind the mask?” Use the newsprint to record ideas. (30 minutes)

3. Revisit the Isaiah text with this question, discussed in small groups: “What might make any of these items into an idol as dumb as the one Isaiah describes?” (20 minutes)
4. Use the remaining time for participants to talk about their own struggles with “stuff” and how they resolve those struggles in what they perceive as godly ways. (25 minutes)
5. Close with a time of prayer, asking for both forgiveness and resolve. (5 minutes)

Option

If the group has experienced THE RACE: A Musical, use the activities and prompts above in reference to Tiffany, the shopping-addicted teen-age daughter of Dave, the hero in the musical. Move past easy condemnation – this character is painted broadly in the musical – so that participants in your group can see into Tiffany more deeply, more appreciatively and more caringly.

More or less Devotions for a stewardship team

Synopsis

This 10-minute devotional time helps participants think how their desires for either “more” or “less can affect this congregation’s purpose.

Bible reflection

1 Timothy 6:6

At its deeper levels, the life of faith offers believers the joy of contentment, escape from the additions of materialism, and the safety of sufficiency. In writing to this first century pastor, Paul might have been reminding him that the church helps its members to be satisfied with their lives. Perhaps Christian congregations today might provide the same benefit as the ancient church.

Sharing activity

1. Participants are each given a single index card. On one side is lettered the word MORE; on the other side LESS.
1. As you show participants typical stewardship-related words or concepts from the list below, ask them to indicate their hopes for the congregation by holding up either the MORE or LESS side of the card. Use any of the following words or concepts:

Money for this congregation

People attending worship

Fame in community

Visits in homes

Forgiveness

Social ministry in community

Overseas mission work

Willing volunteers

Members under 25 years old

Worship opportunities

Grace

Problems

Staff members

Contributions to denomination

2. Ask participants to reflect on what they’ve noticed about their reactions. If anyone has offered a third choice—contentment characterized by “enough”—talk about the reasons for that choice as well. Ask how “more” and “less” match some of the purposes of the congregation, or the work of this stewardship team.

3. Read, summarize or adapt the Bible reflection above, adding your own comments as time allows.

Prayer

Lord of all the Earth, give to us your Spirit's gifts, so that in all our doings we serve your will for the world. With gratitude for your abundance in our lives, we commit our energies and actions to your care. In Christ's name. Amen

At such a time as this
Devotions for a congregational meeting

Synopsis

This devotional time helps participants at a congregational meeting put into perspective the value of the time they will soon spend together.

Bible reflection
Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

The significance of a moment can sometimes be lost if we forget to notice and name what's important. The writer of this collection of Old Testament wisdom reminds readers that as we progress through our lives—including meetings such as this—we can rejoice in God's providence in all circumstances, God's blessing of human activity and God's gift of measured and memorable moments.

Sharing activity

1. Welcome members and guests to this meeting. This devotion will help those attending the meeting to value the words, decisions and other actions that will take place. The devotion helps answer this question: "What good and godly time will characterize this meeting?"
2. As background for the following reading, play meditative music on a musical instrument or through a sound system. After the music has begun, slowly read phrases and sentences of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 in order, pausing for the following interjections of another reader.
3. Another reader intersperses with the Ecclesiastes text significant passages—decisions, summaries of discussion, reports—from the minutes or records of previous congregational meetings. The end result: a kind of choral reading, with each portion of the Bible passage commenting on a portion of the remembered history of the congregation's annual meeting, and vice versa.
4. Note that God blesses other "times such as this." From your own experience as a congregational leader, add your own prayerful thoughts that begin with the starter phrases, "A time to . . . and a time to . . ." For example, "A time to act quickly and a time to refrain from action." Or "a time to repent and a time to forgive." The music continues for a few moments after the last part of the reading.

Prayer

Lord of all time, give us the grace to see that you can bless all moments, all places, all peoples. Send your Holy Spirit at such a time as this, when we need wisdom and courage to do your will. We praise your name and thank you. In Jesus' name. Amen

After THE RACE: Discussion/Sharing Helps

Directions: Print a copy of these leader helps so that you can use them in a post-performance setting following THE RACE: A Musical. Choose discussion/sharing prompts that help participants talk together, about both the subject and themselves.

General Prompts

1. What struck you as particularly important for your life?
2. Which of the characters come close to people you know? What would they think of the message of the musical?
3. What, really, is “The Race?” How do you know that?
4. What’s the difference between “The Race” and “the rat race?” How do you know that?
5. What (important) subtleties did you hear/see/feel in the musical? Why are they important?
6. Besides the obvious messages of the musical, what others come to mind?
7. What does the musical invite you to do, personally? What do you want to do now? How will you do that?
8. What’s any of this have to do with “world hunger?”
9. What would you change – amend, add or subtract – in the musical? For what reason?
10. What in the musical will be hard to forget? Why?
11. With whom would you want to discuss this musical’s message or meaning? Why?
12. For what will you pray now?

Discussion and Sharing for Specific Scenes

Scene 1: The Morning Rush

1. Talk about the usual mealtime routines or interactions in your home. How do they compare with what took place in this scene? How do you feel about that?
2. What does the song, “I’ve Gotta Run” reveal about Dave?
3. Talk about the “success platitudes” you hear in the script and in the song. What do they promise? What meaning do they have or lack?
4. Which Scripture passages jump into your mind as you recall this scene?

Scene 2: Pump You Up

1. Talk about times when you've experienced "your whole future" riding on one event or occurrence – e.g., Dave's presentation. What happened, and how did you react to it?
2. What are your impressions of the gym patrons? What seems familiar or unfamiliar?
3. How could you deepen a conversation like this?
4. What biblical story or parable connects with this scene?

Scene 3: In the Boardroom

1. Talk about the "Mr. Biggins" and "Mr. Middlin" folks you've known in your years of work. What motivates them? What's inside of them, really? How do you get to know them or influence them?
2. In your experience or frame of reference, how true-to-life are the events that transpire in this scene?
3. From Jesus' viewpoint, what's true and what's not true in the song, "It's All Up to You"?
4. Compare the thoughts and words of Dave with the thoughts and words of other folks in this scene. Which connect with your experiences, positively and negatively?
5. What does Mr. Middlin mean when he says, "Funny thing is, it's already happening and you don't even know it."

Scene 4: Shop 'til You Drop

1. Talk about your experiences with "veteran shoppers", or with shopaholics. What's going on in their/your mind when SALE pops up?
2. Some social critics have suggested that Tiffany – or her attitude – is typical of most teens today. How do you react to that statement?
3. In the song, "There's a Sale", which of Tiffany's words make sense to you? Which don't? What the difference between them?
4. In your own life, what's the difference between hoarding and finding a bargain?
5. Talk about how you shop, and what happens inside your soul as you engage in shopping.

Scene 5: Do You Remember

1. In your life, who might Lily be?
2. Characterize the quality of Dave's conversation with Lily as compared to the other conversations in which he participates.

3. If your life was “simpler then”, what changed so that it isn’t as much that way now?
4. If your life was NOT “simpler then”, what has or hasn’t changed?
5. How would you describe a relationship based on simplicity?
6. Lily seems to know the Bible; what parts does she allude to?

Scene 6: Back in the Ballgame

1. Talk about the undercurrent of any of the short speeches of the two gym patrons. What are they trying to say? Why’s that important to Dave?
2. To what emotions or needs do the gym patrons appeal?
3. The platitudes abound once again. Name them and deflate them.
4. In your life, what’s the difference between “enough” and “more”?
5. What does “you’ve earned it” mean to you?

Scene 7: Exciting News

1. Talk about decisions that you’ve made that were dependent on the approval of others.
2. In the song, “What Do They Want from Me,” Dave speaks about “hating the man I have become.” Where do you see that in yourself?
3. When it comes to how you live your life, what words of Scripture “cut you like a knife”?
4. In the song, Dave prays to God, but what is his prayer really? How can you tell?
5. In this musical, who does Skip represent? If he wanted to say more, what would he say?

Scene 8: Taking the First Step

1. What would be a “first step” for you to take – walking or dancing – in order to make your life simpler? With whom would you take that step?
2. In the musical, Dave pays a cost for his decision. What would it cost you to retool your life towards “simple”?
3. “God’s care” comes up often in this scene. How would you hope God’s care would show in your life, were you to make it more simple?
4. Will Lily and Dave become closer friends? Will Tiffany change? How do you feel about those questions?
5. Think about the irony of finishing the musical with a reprise of “I’ve Gotta Run.” What might be the composer’s reasons for the return of that song? Where will you run, if anywhere, when this time together is finished?

Background Readings

Simplicity

In *THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical*, “simplicity” and “simple living” dance with each other like an old married couple: Comfortably close to each other, moving slowly, content just to be together. (Perhaps like Dave and Lily thirty years from now?)

“Simplicity” encompasses just about any human enterprise that’s engaged upon with relative ease, or that’s relatively easy to understand. “Simple living” is any part of daily living that can be made more understandable, more manageable, and more joyful. Here are some other ways to think about this wonderful couple:

Simple living is as much addition as subtraction.

You may already understand the “stop doing this” part of simple living. But when you’re living simple, you also add to your life what got pushed aside in the hustle-bustle of accumulation. Some simple-living adherents would even invoke “multiplication” – of joy and satisfaction – the repeated addition of things like serenity, calm, spare time, quiet, ease, possibility, hope, friendship or savings. In the musical, what gets added to whose life?

Simple living isn’t usually flashy.

Most of the joys of simple living aren’t super-charged. When you declutter and slow down, you don’t get trapped into a razzle-dazzle identity or mindless frolicking. Deep joy hangs around like the scent of lilacs on a summer night. Extraordinary pops out of ordinary like the seeds in a sunflower. What attracts you to simplicity?

There’s more to simple living than meets the eye.

If you keep at it long enough, simple living ends up as an insightful way of thinking and being. When you engage in purposeful simplicity, you’re not blinded by the mind-numbing stresses of the kind of “good life” that drains money or energy. What do you see clearly?

Anyone can do this.

Great intellect, wealth, power or spirituality are not requirements for living simply. If you’re not forced to live this way, simplicity is a choice you can make when you know

that you want to stop being foolish about the way you're living now. What are you ready to do?

Simplicity and simple living, married and still dancing after all these years!

How people change

Right now you're probably asking, "So, how do people change?" Consider these possibilities, each with some trappings of brain science attached:

Fear: Fear not only motivates, but alters brain chemicals and structures, sometimes in addictive ways. Once it becomes habitual, fear changes behaviors long after the reason for fearfulness is gone. (See any fear in the musical?)

Example: One of our at-birth skills is face recognition, followed closely by mimicry. We change in response to what we see in the faces and lives of others. In a sense, we read minds.

Identity: The bonding and bridging mechanisms of our social brain equip us to respond consistently to our perception of ourselves inside of groups. We change when the group changes; we resist change when the group doesn't change. (Who determines Dave's identity in the musical?)

Imagination: "What you can imagine, you can do" describes the function of "mirror neurons" and the capacity of the brain to combine present observation with short-term memory so that a neuronal construct gets translated into corresponding actions.

Actions: Our brains are also superbly equipped for "acting our way into thinking." Thus our attitudes change because we engage in activities that we later process, integrate and improve.

Mindfulness: Lasting change comes when more parts of the brain are engaged. Emotions, intellect, practiced actions and attention are focused on a way of being or doing, and thus the change is cemented into the brain's interwoven workings.

Love: You'll read about it anywhere you read about simple living: When love is received and shared, its power in our lives may be stronger than any of the other processes listed here. In some ways, love is overwhelming. Especially the love of God in Christ Jesus.

So now do you know enough to be a leader in lifestyle change?

Being a lifestyle leader

Have you faced this demon yet? Here's what it says: "And just what kind of a lifestyle leader do you think you are, anyhow?" This fiendish imp knows that you may live in a comfortable home, drive a well-maintained car, eat three square meals a day and don't always keep your calendar from overflowing with ink. This confidence crusher has a point: Not many of us are completely exemplary when it comes to being a leader for lifestyle change.

Demons aside, what might it mean for you to be a "lifestyle leader"? These starter thoughts come to mind:

Lifestyle leadership is more about moving in a direction than reaching the perfect destination. If we're honest, we know that few of us are completely free from materialism, fear of death or the temptation to rush around. But lifestyle leaders can name the *general direction* in which their lives are heading: Less stuff, quieter days, less hectic daily schedules, or more attention given to people around them. A lifestyle leader is heading in the opposite direction from the rest of the crowd.

A lifestyle leader has a "lifestyle conscience." Something inside lifestyle leaders acts like a brain-brake when it comes to any notion that more is better. It's the kind of conscience that says things like "What if everyone lived like this?" or "I'm satisfied" or even "Eventually this behavior destroys something or someone." It works well because it gets used a lot.

Simple questions characterize a lifestyle leader more than complex answers. The matter of simple living is *not* all that complicated. Someone who can help others live simply keeps asking good questions, the ones that probe, insist, draw out, build up or expose. Questions like, "So, how long do you think things can keep going on like this?" or "What's important to you, really?"

The faces of lifestyle leaders show smile wrinkles instead of worry-furrows. There's joy in living simply, and lifestyle leaders understand that well. They're glad to be free of their stuff, happy to sidestep frenetic Saturday soccer schedules, relieved that their credit cards are tamed, cheerful about the future and delighted to have grown up.

Did any of this help you shoo your demons back into their moldy caves?

Encouraging each other

Before you start working on a plan, it might be good for you to think and talk about how well you find, gather and spread courage. That's right, "courage." Guts, nerve, valor, daring, bravery, audacity—you get the picture. The rest of the picture: No courage, no action. No action, no change.

Here's how encouragement works:

1. Any good idea can stay catalogued in the comfort of your long-term memory, but that's not good enough when it comes to changing your behavior.
2. Courage is one of the fundamental requirements for motivation.
3. You get courage from other people—from their example, their words and their suggestions.
4. Because you read, understand and mimic the faces of people you admire, moments of encouragement are usually face-to-face.
5. "Encouraging" sometimes means that the encourager and the encouragee walk together, probably prayerfully.

So, how encouraging are you and your congregation? Or to say it another way, who are the encouragers? If you'd like to know, try some of these actions:

- Revisit courageous moments in your congregation's history. Who were the leaders during those times? How did they behave?
- Read the announcements, invitations or reports you include in worship bulletins, newsletters, letters or annual meetings. Where do you find courage, and where do you find its opposites?
- Name the "Lily's" in your congregation—don't forget youth and children here!—who seem to be able to inspire other members to take action, to volunteer, to sense their calling.

Once you've found the encouragers, talk with them about their ways of thinking, their skill at cheering others along, heartening people, giving confidence or supporting people who otherwise might be hiding behind fear, inferiority or false humility. Collect what you've heard into a set of descriptive stories, and save them for use when you're looking for leaders who might have the nerve to work with you in lifestyle change.

Can you see Jesus' face? He's saying: You can do this!

Some motivators

Consider some proven motivators that might work in your congregation as you prepare for a lifestyle education emphasis.

Crisis and its cousins

Crises occur throughout life, and they might be compelling reasons for members of your congregation to work together towards lifestyle change. People who are stressed almost to the breaking point, who have come to the end of their ropes, whose addictions are ruining them, whose guilt is overwhelming, who are discontented and empty, and who are restless for reasons they can't name—these people are experiencing the kind of quiet or loud calamities that might tip them towards lifestyle changes. In the musical, what was the real crisis in Dave's life? How do you know?

The example of Christ

For members whose piety is strong but whose lifestyles are disconnected from their faith, the daily life and teachings of Jesus can be a convincing reason to consider amending their lives.

The presence and example of others

People motivate people, and so a congregational lifestyle emphasis can start with the assurance that all around you are mentors, spouses with vision, living legacies, grateful others and inviting relationships—each a means by which lifestyle education might begin. Besides the musical's Lily, who provides Dave with an example for living?

Known capabilities waiting to be realized

Down deep, a lot of your members know that they have the capacity to downshift their lives. Helping them recall those capabilities can sometimes be enough reason for them to begin new behaviors or to cast off old habits.

Moments of change

Sudden “aha's”, spiritual mountaintops, career change, check-in points or even cataclysmic events - all can grip a person in the notion, “Now's the time to stop doing all that, and start doing this.” Sometimes these moments are as quiet as a sudden catch of

breath or turned head. In the musical, what moments of change come upon Dave? His daughter? His son?

However you name them, motivating factors are available all around you, ready for your use to good affect. A good place to start: Ask yourself and a few others your reasons for moving towards simpler living.

Avoiding common errors

Somewhere in your distant past you may have met a Prophetic Warning that wagged its gnarly finger in your direction and said, “Sonny, beware the Frumptious Bagwog!” Or something like it, perhaps? Warnings are helpful when it comes to helping others seek lifestyle change.

Here are some common errors that the Prophetic Warner might have been telling you to avoid; they flow from what you may already know or what others know as well.

1. Don't count on information-sharing or rhetoric. They don't change forebrains all that much, nor do they get at the emotional decision-making functions of the rest of the brain.
2. Avoid the presumption that the whole congregation will get involved in the effort to change lifestyles. Most folks will have deep difficulty in admitting that lifestyle change might be one way in which God's grace shows up tangibly in their lives. Find a few folks who understand Dave (or Lily) in the musical. Share your vision and begin there.
3. Don't make lifestyle education merely into a kind of post-Yoga self-help class. These matters are deeply spiritual! Materialistic and hurried lifestyles suck out of God's people the time and attention that they need to stay connected to the Savior they claim to follow.
4. Resist the temptation to start or plan big. Start small, then trust this emphasis to develop like the early church spread. Good news travels quickly among people who yearn for manageable, purposeful lives.
5. Don't start with the problems you want to solve. Think instead of all the capabilities that exist in your congregation in order for this emphasis to begin and grow. Build your planning on the assets—the useful gifts—around you.
6. Stay away from anger, arrogance or animosity. You're inviting people into something good, not using lifestyle education as a way to secretly punish imagined miscreants for their shortcomings.

When you make your own blunders, trust God's forgiveness and the abundant gifts of the Holy Spirit to help you move forward.

And of course, always learn from your mistakes.

Using the Musical

You can make THE RACE: A Musical into something important and memorable in your congregational life. Click on any of the following links to find ways by which THE RACE will expand into congregational life like whipped cream fills a strawberry shortcake.

Involving others

THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical might be one of those places where you invite others into a unique experience, beginning or strengthening relationships that develop into lasting friendships and mission. Use any of these suggestions in order to increase the number of individuals involved in the production of this musical.

1. Make a list of the “out of the box” people in your congregation and community who might be attracted to this musical as an outlet for their sense of calling. HINT: Don’t forget to consider the “inactives” who may be intrigued by this new effort.
2. Invite people personally, in moments of conversation. Follow the first invitation with written or printed reminders.
3. Make the musical into a community or ecumenical effort.
4. Invite families – or married couples – to take roles or tasks in the musical.
5. Try to put together two or more completely separate casts, choirs or instrumental groups. (See pages 10-11 in the musical.)
6. When you extend invitations, make each role, task or activity discrete and manageable.
7. Invent new tasks or roles – The Director’s Assistant or Cast Refreshments Coordinator.
8. Think carefully about the people who can help with technical details – costumes, lighting, props, sound – as well as those skilled in marketing or inviting.
9. Add a component to the musical’s performance – e.g., a “dinner theater” venue – that will take advantage of talents other than acting or playing instruments.
10. Don’t overlook children as active workers. HINT: Children usually assure that their parents will participate, too, if only as adoring audience members!
11. For further thoughts, see “Starting Out or Running Ahead”. (See page 6 in the musical.)

Single performance options

If you choose to make the musical a one-time-only performance, consider these possibilities:

1. The musical can grace the start or end of a congregational program year, significant anniversary celebration, community event or some other important occasion.
2. Begin reading, casting and rehearsal processes many months in advance of the single performance.
3. If you choose to use “readers’ theater” as the method of performance, focus on the follow-up times for discussion and sharing. Include refreshments.
4. Think carefully about which single occasion will least conflict with other priorities.
5. The musical will probably NOT work well as a substitute for worship, nor does its 75-minute length compress well to fit inside a liturgical worship service.
6. Make arrangements for the videotaping of the dress rehearsal as well as the performance itself. This assures that the experience can be shared at other times.
7. Pick a special venue – e.g., community band shell – that will complement the one-time-only nature of your performance.

Mini-drama series

The musical works well as a sequenced set of scenes, spaced out over a period of time. Think of these options:

1. Use the musical in a dedicated small group experience within your congregation; two scenes per evening, with added times for discussion/sharing and fellowship.
2. If your adult forum or other adult education programs allow it, offer the musical over eight weeks, one scene per week. Add in refreshment and extended conversation. You might even consider including personal testimony or skill-building – e.g., how to talk with your children about credit cards.
3. If your sermons are based on themes, use scenes from the musical as the experiential anchor for an eight-week long sermon series on simple living.
4. If your sermons are based on the lectionary, see Hunger Sermon Starters (www.elca.org/hunger) for possible connections to the themes of the musical.
5. Videotape each of the scenes separately, posting them at your congregation’s Web site, or on a public sharing Web site such as YouTube or Google Video.
6. Add “commercials” – e.g., invitations to participate in a Hunger Program funding appeal.

7. Think of activities – tasks, projects, check-lists, interview times – in which audience members might participate; add these to the performance of each scene to fill out the experience they will have.

The drama company tour

One compelling use of this musical might be a “drama tour”, a way to put your congregation’s capabilities to good use in other venues. Consider these possibilities:

1. Offer to perform the drama in several local congregations – or perhaps in cooperation with them. Target ecumenical partners.
2. Consider performing the drama at already-scheduled events, such as youth convos, synod assemblies, regional conferences.
3. Set up an actual tour, gathering financial and material support for a schedule that includes significant geography and numbers of performances.
4. Plan the logistics for a tour before you begin casting calls and other preparations. Cast and crew members will need to match their schedules to the tour. Consider how to make lighting, sets, costumes, etc. portable.
5. Confer with leaders in the places you will perform, so that you add value to their congregations, their programs or their emphases.
6. Be prepared for post-performance matters, such as times of sharing, conversation, and program follow-up in these places.
7. Consider the “tour” as a time to train people in other places to offer their own performances of THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical.

Hunger or stewardship program kickoff/wrap-up

This musical is especially suited for congregational emphases in stewardship or hunger/justice. You might try some of these possibilities in those two areas of congregational life:

1. Begin or end the program emphasis with one or more performances of the musical, taking special note of activities, readings, publicity items and other program helps on this Website as preparatory or accompanying material.
2. Use the biblical connections suggested in this Web site to help you match the program theme to the themes of the musical.
3. Think carefully how you will use rehearsal and recruitment processes as opportunities for learning and sharing among cast and crew members.
4. Adapt publicity materials to serve as preparatory or follow-up activities – devotions, conversation starters, checklists, readings, etc. – for at-home use.

5. Connect the performance of the musical to a longer/deeper learning experience in your congregation. For example, see the resource, *Sustaining Simplicity: A Journal* for use in small group or individual devotions.
6. Add to the musical a time of celebration – e.g., a break between scenes – allowing the distribution or in-gathering of commitment forms, contributions, stories, successes, vision-setting documents.
7. Be sure to connect the musical's themes to matters such as hope, courage, and a sense of mission in the world.
8. Where possible, use the songs of the musical – e.g., “What Do They Want From Me?” – as anthem or background music.

Fellowship event

In many congregations, times of fellowship function as more than bonding and bridging processes, also providing moments of learning and witness that are delightfully embedded in “ordinary conversation.” Should you decide to use THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical in this kind of setting, consider these ideas:

1. Think how you will use the atmospherics of the event – setting, refreshments, people invited, time of day – to help enhance conversation before and after the musical.
2. Use publicity materials as prompts for conversation starters, especially conversations that help participants share their values and yearnings about life.
3. Ask some of the actors and crew to visit participant tables or groups post-performance, talking about how the musical raised questions, offered assurance, made them think. In this way, the performers and crew get to share their witness.
4. Think carefully how to involve children and youth in the conversations, so that they participate fully in the experience of the musical. Thanks to the musical's broadly painted characters and story line, children as young as eight years old will recognize the characters and the situations and dilemmas. Frame questions especially for them, perhaps those they can use in conversations with their own parents or friends.

Community event

In many communities, church-related events can gather attention and appreciation for the rest of the congregation's ministries. THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical could be a helpful, thoughtful and useful means by which an entire community comes together. You might try some of these possibilities:

1. From start to finish, make the entire experience ecumenical in its planning and execution.

2. Designate one or more recipients of the community's generosity, such as Lutheran World Relief, Church World Service or a local hunger-related enterprise – e.g., community food bank.
3. Assay the capacities of all participating organizations and congregations in order to expand the total experience. For example, one congregation may have exquisite experiences in quilt-making for overseas use, so you might add in a quilt-dedication component to the event.
4. Involve civic leaders, not just religious leaders. Their interests could be as well served by the themes of this musical as would congregations'. HINT: Recognize up-front that the depiction of "Biggins and Rude" is *not* meant to characterize all businesses or their leaders.
5. Piggyback the musical production onto related activities, such as a:
 - bake sale
 - parade
 - flea market or auction
 - special guest
 - benefit for a cause recognized by the entire community
 - welcome for Sister City partners
 - a significant anniversary of a notable event in the community's history.
6. If your community is centrally located invite as many communities as possible from around the area.
7. Adapt the follow-up activities to match your setting, and the people in your locale. One universal option: The sale or display of other resources (from the library or a local bookstore). Another: At-home activities or sharing items for families.

Small group ministry

Should your congregation offer formal or informal small group ministry, you might consider these ideas:

1. Use each scene of the musical to start personal sharing among group participants. Keep away from "talking about" the subjects at hand; relate more to individual hopes and yearnings.
2. Use any of the three discussion guides for small groups as follow-up sessions.
3. Assign individual scenes to small groups in your congregation, with the responsibility to perform the scenes at a larger congregational or community event. (Think of the experience as a dramatic puzzle!)
4. Supplement any use of the musical with some of the activities on this Web site. Be certain that there will be enough time for both the musical scene(s) and the activity you have chosen.

5. Because “simplicity” continues into almost every facet of daily living, keep track of the themes and emotions of participants as they engage in times of sharing. This will help you decide about next steps or other resources to explore.
6. Because the musical evokes emotions and subjects that are close to the heart of many people in contemporary society, you might want to remind the group about safeguarding privacy and confidences.

Cast and crew learning

One important feature of THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical is its implicit invitation to conversation about what’s important. Use any of these ideas to extend that benefit to the people who comprise the cast and crew:

1. Begin each rehearsal with a time of prayer, meditation or personal sharing. Whether about the themes of the musical or about the ministry of drama, these times will help draw the cast and crew toward God and each other. The biblical connections in the musical might be helpful here. (See the section, “Bible Conversations,” on page 8 of the script and score book.)
2. Each time you approach new material – a scene or a song – spend time together talking about the meaning of what will be presented or sung. Ask actors and singers to think about the persons they are portraying, their viewpoints and their motivations. Musicians can find the places where the words of the songs suggest interpretations or dynamics. All participants can work together to see this musical as a proclamation, and hence a ministry of the congregation.
3. Use any of the discussion/sharing questions to help cast and crew understand the deeper significance of individual scenes and songs.
4. As you work with members of the cast and crew, be sensitive to the possibilities that by their participation in this musical they are coming to question their own lifestyle decisions. Be ready to listen to concerns deeper than at first might meet the eye.

Adult learning opportunities

THE RACE: A Simplicity Musical might be a good learning tool for adult education in your congregation. Think of these possibilities as you plan:

1. Each session of an adult forum series on the subject of lifestyle could easily begin with one or two scenes from the musical, offered as readers’ theater.
2. Use the resources available from other, linked organizations to construct learning opportunities or deeper explorations.

3. Keep the learning experiential, avoiding a purely intellectual approach to this subject. “Simplicity” is about more than macro-economic theory or philosophies of “the good life.”
4. Consider peer-learning, small group activities, checklists, exploration of current events or contemporary culture, debates, simulations and role plays. Each involves the participants as active learners, which is more certain to motivate them toward lifestyle change than more cognitively oriented approaches.
5. On the other hand, if adult learners in your setting are ready for more deeply cognitive matters, consider moving the discussions into subjects such as:
 - connections to world or domestic hunger (e.g., refugees, homelessness)
 - environmental or societal collapse
 - the neurobiology of acquisitiveness
 - the functions of “marketing” in a civil society
 - the relative values or dangers of various economic systems
 - a biblical view of economic justice
 - processes by which to raise children to value simplicity
6. If adult learning opportunities are more informal, you might copy, distribute and talk about any of the readings on this Web site.