



Interfaith Food Pantry

Serving Morris County

What Does It Feel Like To Be Hungry?

Summary:

This activity demonstrates that food is not distributed equally. Students will discuss their feelings about inequality, the myths surrounding hunger and the gap between the rich and the poor.

Time: 30 to 40 minutes

Age: Elementary School to Adult

Materials:

- Box of Cheerios
- 25 Small Paper Bags (Adjust Based on Group Size)

Preparation:

1. Gather materials
2. Distribute Cheerios into bags:
 - a. Eight Bags – empty
 - b. Eight Bags – 5 Cheerios
 - c. Eight Bags – 10 Cheerios
 - d. One Bag – 50 Cheerios

Group Size: 15-30

Procedure:

1. Tell the students they will receive a snack.
2. Give each student a closed bag. Tell the students to open their bags only after everyone has received one.

3. After students open their bag, ask them questions about what happened. Why didn't they all get the same amount of Cheerios? Tell the students they have a few minutes to work out a fairer distribution system. Encourage them to share the snack as a group. Praise them for their efforts to share (NOTE: be prepared for difficulties. Some students may be unwilling to share. If this occurs, explain how this situation shows how hard it is for people to work together and share, especially when resources are limited).
4. Tell the group that food and wealth aren't always equally distributed. Ask students how they felt after receiving either a small or larger snack. Tell them that the activity is designed to help them understand that in many countries, including the US, food is not distributed equally.

Discussion Questions:

1. How did you feel when you realized that food had not been distributed equally?
2. Why did this happen?
3. Did anyone want to take someone else's food during the lesson?
4. Did you know about these inequalities?
5. Are there hungry people where you live?
6. Consider this common myth: People are hungry because they're too lazy to work. Explain that many people who are hungry are working, going to school, or looking for work. They just don't make enough to make ends meet, especially if they have a family to feed.