

The Global Farmer Experience Bible Study Companion



This Bible Study is a companion to the Global Farmer Experience, which exposes participants to the issues that farmers face in the developing world, and is appropriate for youth groups, Sunday School classes, or other faith-based settings.

Total Time Required: 1-1.5 hours.

- ♥ 5 Minutes Welcome and Introduction
- ♥ 15 Minutes Bible Study & Conversation
- ♥ 40-60 Minutes Global Farmer Experience (host can limit or extend conversation)
- ♥ 10 Minutes Application & Closing

Participants: 3-50 (With 10 or more, it is best to break into smaller discussion groups)

Supplies:

- ♥ Game Board (one per group)
- ♥ Game Pieces (19 pieces per group). These can be tokens, corn seeds, small blocks, etc.
- ♥ Global Farmer Experience Script
- ♥ Global Farmer Experience PowerPoint (optional, but strongly preferred)
- ♥ Bibles

Preparation:

- ♥ Set up PowerPoint and screen to ensure it is working properly.
- ♥ Hand out enough game boards and pieces for each team.
- ♥ Read through this study and in particular the Global Farmer Experience to familiarize yourself.
- ♥ Be prepared to think of how the group might be interested in following-up, paying particular attention to the action items. Consider inviting someone involved with a Growing Project with Growing Hope Globally in your area, making some space for them to share what they are already doing and how others can get involved.
- ♥ Spend some time in prayer that this would be a formative experience for the students to learn how their faith can be put into action and to identify the real needs we find in the world.

INTRODUCTION: DECISIONS

Host: We are going to take a few minutes to play the game “Would You Rather?” You will need to decide between two choices and give your reasons for why? I’ll read both options and give you ten seconds to reflect and then ask you to raise your right hand for option one and your left hand for option two. And I’ll ask at least one of you to share why you went with that answer.

So, would you rather.....

- ♥ Kiss a Frog or Hug a Snake?
- ♥ Meet your Great-Great Grandparent or Great-Great Grandchild?
- ♥ Sing a solo or perform as a clown?

These are some absurd decisions that you probably won’t need to make in life, especially on the spot. But we know there are difficult decisions that you do have to make in your life that have real consequences.

BIBLE STUDY

Host: We all make difficult decisions in school, in our families, and about our future. Many people live in poverty around the world and have to make decisions where the consequences have long-lasting effects.... like whether they’ll have enough food to survive.

Much of the developing world is actually closer to the conditions of those who lived in the accounts we find in scripture, where the reality of hunger hit much closer to home, especially for the most vulnerable, such as orphans, widows, and immigrants. In the time of Jesus, it is estimated that 9 out of 10 people lived at subsistence level or below (Subsistence means that someone has just enough to survive.). It is estimated that more than two thirds of people lived in severe or extreme hunger.¹

Yet God gave some instructions through more than 2,000 Biblical references from prophets, teachers, and apostles on how people should respond to those who suffer from hunger. We cannot read them all today, but perhaps you have heard some like Isaiah 58:10, which reads: “If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.” Or when Jesus says in a parable found in Matthew 25, “For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat,...” (v.36) demonstrating that to care for those who are hungry is as if you are caring for him, as he says, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” (Matthew 25:40)

One other piece of instruction was from James, an early Christian leader. He wrote a letter to his fellow believers with some specific instructions about a decision they likely faced on a regular basis, which reads, “What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.”

Host: What decision is James having them make? (Collect Responses: How will they respond to someone in need? Will they just wish them the best or will they respond?)

Do you have a story of having shared a need you had and someone said kind things, but did nothing to help you meet that need? How did that feel? (As a host, have a story ready from your own life.)

James is teaching that faith and action go hand in hand.

Many still struggle with hunger around the world. We could wish them well, but we also know there are more effective ways to respond.

We often find ourselves most readily responding to those dealing with crisis situations like famine, natural disaster or conflict. We see these events in the news and they tug at our heartstrings. We want to do something immediately, so we make a donation and we feel good by helping.

This isn't a bad thing: relief food and supplies are often needed in times of crisis. But what happens when the news cycle changes and our attention moves on to the next crisis? What happens to those people a month or a year down the road when they are no longer in the spotlight?

What if, instead of giving food immediately following a disaster, we supported development programs that help people to prepare for disasters and build resilience so they are able to quickly get back on their feet when crisis strikes?

Most of the millions of people who struggle with hunger will never make the news because they are not faced with an immediate crisis, but rather a life-long struggle with poverty. Although they may not be in the spotlight, they are no less precious in God's eyes.

What if, instead of giving short-term relief, God is calling us to come alongside our global neighbors with agricultural development programs that can help them find lasting solutions to hunger and know the dignity of being able to grow their own food?

As Christians, who want to share God's love, we want to invest in the whole person: their mind, body, and spirit. We want to help to build them up so they can thrive. Then they can share that gift with others and help them to thrive too.

Together we are going to engage in some of the decisions those who struggle with poverty and rely on the growing of their own food have to face on a daily basis, through a simulation called The Global Farmer Experience.

GLOBAL FARMER EXPERIENCE

Begin the Global Farmer Experience on Page Two of the Global Farmer Experience Leader's Guide and follow the script through to the final page.

APPLICATION: WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT GLOBAL HUNGER?

Host: “What do you think we can do about global hunger?”(Collect ideas and use them to introduce the three following action items.)

- ♥ Keep Learning.
 - ♥ Keep your eyes, ears, and hearts open for stories about countries and places that are facing and dealing with hunger. How are people choosing to respond?
 - ♥ Spend some time reading and reflecting on scripture verses and stories that have to do with hunger and ask yourself, “How might I respond to this?” We have a list of scriptures you could read over the next week that can help you. (List of scriptures attached.)
- ♥ Pray for our global neighbors who struggle with hunger and poverty.
 - ♥ Spend some time praying for those who are hungry, those who are taking steps to improve their family’s situation, and for the people, churches, and organizations who are helping them.
- ♥ Support agricultural development through a Growing Project with Growing Hope Globally.
 - ♥ **Start or Join a Growing Project** (If you invited someone involved with a Growing Project with Growing Hope Globally in your area, make some space for them to share what they are already doing and how others can get involved. Another option is to show an explanation video about Growing Hope, which is available at [GrowingHopeGlobally.org/about-us/videos/](https://growinghopeglobally.org/about-us/videos/)).
 - ♥ **Support an Overseas Program** as an individual, a group, or a church.

CLOSING

Host: As we close, let’s take some time to pray for those who make decisions everyday about the steps they will take to feed their families.

(Options: 1. Feel free to pray as you feel comfortable and led. 2. Use the written prayer below.)

God of Abundance, we thank you for the gift of food. We are grateful for the food that we have and those that grow it, supply it, transport it, and sell it. We know in much of the world, hunger is an everyday reality, forcing people made in your image to make difficult decisions. We would pray that you would bless those who are hungry and empower them in their pursuits of growing their own food. We ask that you would give wisdom to those organizations, churches, and individuals that are committed to helping create lasting solutions to hunger. Show us how we might respond in the decisions that we make, partnering with them and you in this good and important work, as a demonstration of our faith and your love. Amen.

Seven Days of Scripture on Hunger



Scriptures

- ♥ Day 1 - Isaiah 58:1-11
- ♥ Day 2 - Matthew 25:31-46
- ♥ Day 3 - 1 John 3:16-18
- ♥ Day 4 - Deuteronomy 24:19-22
- ♥ Day 5 - Luke 14:7-14
- ♥ Day 6 - Psalm 146
- ♥ Day 7 - Isaiah 65:17-25

Daily Reflection Questions

- ♥ What is this scripture saying about hunger and poverty?
- ♥ What is God saying to me through this scripture?

Daily Prayer

Loving God,
Thank you for scripture, as I have read it, allow its truth to sink deep into my heart and may I respond in action and prayer to what it is saying. Empower those around the world who are growing food for their families and others. And for those who find themselves in hunger, may they experience lasting solutions to that hunger. Bless those who are responding to those real needs today. Amen.

To learn more about Growing Hope Globally visit GrowingHopeGlobally.org