

# RESULTS

*Turning the Ship*  
*Building Champions*  
*to End Poverty*  
*(Christian Version)*



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**ONE SABBATH 2008**



# RESULTS Faith in Action Project

## “Turning the Ship” Faith-based Curriculum

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

— Margaret Mead

This curriculum has been created for use by communities of faith seeking to take their justice work into the realm of political action.. Our religious faith compels many of us to work for justice for the most vulnerable among us. However, knowing how to connect with up-to-the-minute policy research and legislative activity so that we can speak truth to power in appropriate, efficient and effective ways is not always readily apparent. In other words, we are abundant in the “why” — the moral authority to act, but may need help with the “how” — putting it into action. This curriculum is designed to help close that gap.

The curriculum is a product of RESULTS and RESULTS Educational Fund. RESULTS is a nonprofit grassroots advocacy organization committed to creating the political will to end hunger and the worst aspects of poverty. RESULTS is also committed to individuals exercising their personal and political power by lobbying elected officials for effective solutions and key policies that affect hunger and poverty. RESULTS is a 501(c)(4), a non-tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

RESULTS Educational Fund is dedicated to educating the public, the media, and leaders about issues related to poverty and hunger in the United States and abroad. We hold public forums, train citizens in democracy, hold media conference calls to share the latest information, and produce quality oversight research to determine the effectiveness of programs for the poor. [RESULTS Educational Fund](#) is a 501(c)(3), tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

This curriculum is provided to you by the Faith in Action Project of the RESULTS Educational Fund. RESULTS' Faith in Action Project is designed to expand our successful advocacy network to communities of faith. Although RESULTS is not a religious organization, we recognize the strength the faith community brings to this work. Many RESULTS volunteers consider their participation in RESULTS an expression of their faith. Faith calls for compassion and compassion calls for action. RESULTS hopes that this curriculum is a valuable tool for action, and we appreciate the chance to be partners with communities of faith in creating a better world.

## The Core Values of RESULTS

**Transformation**

**Learning**

**Action**

**Community and Relationship**

**Empowering Citizenship**

Activists live out these core values through the achievement of activist milestones, concrete actions taken to give voice to the ending of hunger and poverty.

This curriculum is designed to work best in a small group format. You can gather together a comfortable group of folks to do it or use it in a pre-existing fellowship or class. It is best to designate a facilitator so that each week's discussion can be prepped and a copy printed out for each participant. Depending on your group's time constraints, the introduction session and wrap-up session can be covered as separate weekly sessions for maximum impact. This way, the curriculum will last for seven weeks. Additionally, check out the RESULTS website for corresponding resources that will enrich the study experience.

# Session 1 — Turning the Ship: An Introduction

We stand by as children starve by the millions because we lack the will to eliminate hunger. Yet we have found the will to develop missiles, capable of flying over the polar cap and landing within a few hundred feet of their target. This is not innovation. It is a profound distortion of humanity's purpose on earth.

— Former U.S. Senator Mark Hatfield

## WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS

**Matthew 25:40:** *“The King will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*

## GET ACQUAINTED

- Everyone in the group share your name and one of your life purposes.
- Review the background on RESULTS: *See cover page*

## WHAT'S THE ISSUE?

Currently, more than eight million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive.

— Jeffrey Sachs

*The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetime*

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!

— Amos 5:24

The Bible is overflowing with discussions of how we use the resources we are given, and yet dealing with money continues to be one of the most vexing issues of our lives. When communities of faith see levels of abject poverty in a world of abundance, the issue becomes even that much more troubling.

Many congregations and religious groups work to address poverty in their communities by working with soup kitchens, food pantries, clothing drives, homeless shelters, and in other ways. These acts are necessary expressions of compassion and love in a hurting world, but they address more the symptoms, rather than the root causes, of poverty. Archbishop Helder Camara, Brazilian liberation theologian, once said, “When I gave food to the poor, they called me a saint. When I asked why the poor have no food, they called me a Communist.” Justice is challenging and, at times, unexpectedly controversial. But when churches also turn some of their attention to why people need the soup kitchens and clothing drives, they are engaged in the critical task of examining issues of justice.

Just as Jesus overturned the money-changers' tables in the Temple, the Church is called to speak truth to power when the positive potential of money is misused, abused, or distorted. But how can this be done? How do we start affecting root causes of poverty and not just reacting to poverty? How can we start changing out-of-balance systems and not just symptoms? What tools do we have available in order to speak truth to power — and change things from the ground up — in ways that are appropriate, efficient, and effective?

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

Let's take an image that can help us.

A **trimtab** is a tiny navigational part found on the back of the main rudder on a large ship. When this little trimtab is turned, it moves the main rudder and ultimately changes the direction of the entire ship. Thus, the metaphor is apparent — a seemingly small effort has the ability to make a huge impact. Futurist and inventor Buckminster Fuller coined our usage of the term “trimtab” when he said, “If you want to turn the ship of state,

you shouldn't try to push the ship around from the front or even try turning the rudder, but find the trimtab and turn that, and then the rudder and ship will turn more easily."

How do we start "turning the ship" so that we create a world that cares for the least of these?

Through this curriculum, we will explore five values that illuminate paths for change:

- **Transformation**
- **Learning**
- **Action**
- **Community and Relationship**
- **Empowering Citizenship**

By further examining these values — and how they resonate with Scripture — we can see more clearly how we can begin to turn the ship and create a new and better world in which everyone has the opportunity to live and thrive.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

#### **Desired Outcomes:**

- *Knowledge* — a grasp of new information about the challenge of poverty and the ways we can triumph over it
- *Engagement* — a readiness to make a real difference through justice for the impoverished
- *Action* — a plan for our community to move forward in the work of eliminating hunger and the worst aspects of poverty

#### **Group Share:**

- Each person is invited to share one insight he/she wants to come away with by the end of the curriculum.

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

O persistent God,  
deliver me from assuming your mercy is gentle.  
Pressure me that I may grow more human,  
not through the lessening of my struggles,  
but through an expansion of them  
that will undamn me  
and unbury my gifts.  
Deepen my hurt  
until I learn to share it  
and myself  
openly,  
and my needs honestly.  
Sharpen my fears  
until I name them  
and release the power I have locked in them  
and they in me.  
Accentuate my confusion  
until I shed those grandiose expectations  
that divert me from the small, glad gifts  
of the now and the here and the me.  
Expose my shame where it shivers,  
crouched behind the curtains of propriety,  
until I can laugh at last  
through my common frailties and failures,

laugh my way toward becoming whole.  
Deliver me  
from just going through the motions  
and wasting everything I have  
which is today,  
a chance,  
a choice,  
my creativity,  
your call.  
O persistent God,  
let how much it all matters  
pry me off dead center  
so if I am moved inside  
to tears  
or sighs  
or screams  
or smiles  
or dreams,  
they will be real  
and I will be in touch with who I am  
and who you are  
and who my sisters and brothers are.

*(Ted Loder)*

## Session 2 — Turning the Ship Through Transformation

History will be our judge, but what's written is up to us. Who we are, who we've been, what we want to be remembered for.

— Bono from *The End of Poverty: How We Can Make It Happen In Our Lifetime* by Jeffrey D. Sachs

### **WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS**

**2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV):** “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!”

**Study:** 2 Corinthians 5:11–21

This particular passage comes from a larger letter from the apostle Paul to the Church at Corinth. Paul's life and ministry were not smooth. Paul was a persecutor of the followers of Christ. His words and actions were antithetical to the momentum and mission of the Church. But then on the Damascus Road, Paul met God in a dramatic, life-changing way. His life was transformed — even having his name changed from its original, Saul — and while this transformation didn't guarantee a trouble-free life, it made for a life of great adventure and holy purpose.

### **Questions for Discussion**

- *What does transformation mean to you?*
- *Have you ever experienced a transformation in your life? Why did this happen? What was the result?*
- *Why doesn't transformation in Christ eliminate all struggles?*
- *Do you feel that the Church is still in the transformation business? Why or why not? If so, what does that look like? If not, does something need to change?*

### **CAN WE MAKE A CHANGE?**

Being transformed and participating in the transformation of our world — this is the kind of work Christ calls us to in the Scriptures. It is a holy calling, one that carries us into a remarkable and utterly unpredictable journey.

*Dan Zukergood, a former junior and senior high school social studies teacher, recalled his own transformation from “civic cynic” to “empowered citizen.”*

*“As a new social studies teacher living in upstate New York in the mid-1980s,” Dan recalled, “I remember telling my students, ‘[K]ids, as members of a democracy, you must communicate with your representatives and tell them how you want to be represented.’ Yet, even while I was saying this, the little voice in my head was saying, ‘[M]y representatives would never listen to me. So why would they ever listen to a bunch of junior and senior high kids?’”*

*“I also remember telling my students, ‘[K]ids, you know that each one of you can make a big difference in the world.’ Yet, even while I was saying this, the little voice in my head was saying, ‘I can't even make a difference, so why should a bunch of teenagers be able to?’ And I was their social studies teacher!”*

*It was after Dan and his wife, Laurie Herrick, started a RESULTS group in Oneonta, New York, in the mid-1980s that Dan's eyes were opened to the power of citizens educating themselves and taking action.*

*“Even when I taught at the junior and senior high school level,” Dan recalled, “I learned that kids can make a difference — even if they are not old enough to vote. The first RESULTS-like action my student ever took was a letter they wrote to Rep. Sherwood Boehlert (R-NY). They asked him to cosponsor a bill.*

*I can't remember what the actual bill was, but I can recite his response to the students pretty much by heart.*

*The letter looked like this:*

Dear Students,

Not only was I NOT going to cosponsor the bill you described, but I had intended to vote against it. But, due to your excellent argument, I have decided to cosponsor the bill.

Thank you for making me more aware of this issue.

Sincerely,

Rep. Sherwood Boehlert

P.S. — Never let anyone ever tell you that five seventh graders can't change the vote of a Congressman!

— Taken from *Reclaiming Our Democracy* by Sam Daley-Harris (1994, 2004; Camino Books)

### **TAKE ACTION!**

Learning about transformative, justice-producing tools like microcredit corresponds with RESULTS activist Milestone #1, "Choosing a RESULTS issue and learning its basics"

Link: <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=37>

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK**

- Round up impressions and thoughts on personal and civic transformation
- Key takeaway: As Christ transforms us through His love, we are called to transform the world through acts of mercy and justice.
- Pondering for the week: Is the energy of the transformations in my life something I can harness for the creation of a more thriving world?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

God of creation,

Your love is a transforming force.

We are so grateful for how fiercely and persistently You love us and work the clay of our hearts so that we might be molded into the kind of people who reflect that love in our thoughts, words, actions, and aspirations.

Change us from people who merely feel bad about an injustice to people who discern an action and take it in the name of righting a wrong, in the name of standing with our brothers and sisters.

This week, do a transforming work in our spirits, illuminating the path we must go and emboldening us for the journey.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.

## Session 3 — Turning the Ship Through Learning

I am still learning.

— Michelangelo

### WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS

**Mark 12:30 (NIV):** “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”

**Study:** Mark 12:28–34

The teacher of the law mentioned in this portion of Scripture asks Jesus a rather straightforward question that gets at the heart of faith life as it was being lived in Old Testament times: Which commandment of the Jewish faith is most critical? Unlike so many other scribes and leaders, this particular individual doesn't seem intent on tricking Jesus. The question is clear and the answer is clear. God is calling people to live into an all-encompassing love.

Mark inserts the Greek word *dianoias*, referring to thought or intellect, into his description of how we should love; this is an acknowledgement of the Greek method of engaging faith through the mind. Such a mention is played out in contemporary expressions of Christianity. For example, in Albert Outler's characterization of John Wesley's theology for what would become The United Methodist Church, he includes the application of reason as a key component of how a believer should engage in a life of faith.

- *How does this initially strike you, the idea of a “reasoning faith”?*

The Church has traditionally been intensely focused on loving with the heart and soul. We even focus on the strength of loving — through perseverance, and even through physical labor. But what about loving with the mind? What about “thinking love,” and how might the practice of that bear fruit?

Churches historically have a tradition of Christian education, but that education can often focus on internal matters — the learning of Scripture, liturgical patterns, and the like.

### Questions for Discussion

- *Do we, as the Church, engage in the kind of learning that extends out into the world?*
- *How does learning about the problems — and possibilities — of real, everyday people impact our faith? Is it a matter of the learning simply impacting us, or do we then move to make a difference because of what we now know?*

### CAN WE MAKE A CHANGE?

Jesus' inquisitive mind being sharpened at the feet of the elders in the synagogue — this image reminds us of the importance of continually learning and growing along the journey of faith. Learning helps us refine our thinking, engage in fresh ways of doing things, understand our neighbors better, and even have a little bit of fun along the way.

*RESULTS is an inspiring organization that has done more for my spiritual growth than anything I have ever done. My faith as a United Methodist is strongly rooted in the social justice tradition. I was asked once why I am a part of RESULTS and I didn't hesitate in my answer. It's what I believe Jesus asked us to do when he said, “For as much as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me.” I have never felt closer to doing “what God calls me to do” than when I am acting as the persistent widow did before the unjust judge. Like her, I am sometimes rewarded with a senator who consents to voting for justice by expanding food stamp legislation or a representative who signs on in support of matched savings accounts for the poor. What does the Lord require of me? To do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with my God. RESULTS supports me in my good intentions to do exactly that.*

— Nancy Daniels, RESULTS Activist, Topeka, Kansas

## **TAKE ACTION!**

Learning how to speak concisely and powerfully about a justice issue corresponds with activist milestone #2, “Create and deliver a Laser Talk” — <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1358>. Speaking clearly and passionately is the first step to taking our reasoned faith into the world.

### **Example Laser Talk:**

**Introduction:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with RESULTS. Do you have a few minutes to talk about the role of faith in fighting poverty?

**Engage:** As a person of faith, I am deeply concerned that while many politicians publicly espouse their faith and talk about wanting government to reflect our “moral values,” so few of them view ending poverty as a moral imperative.

**Problem:** In 2006, over 36 million people in the U.S. were living in poverty, many of them children. It is estimated that sixty percent of Americans will live in poverty for at least one year of their adult life. Poverty not only affects finances, it has devastating effects on health, education, nutrition, housing and family stability.

**Inform:** Poverty is not a “poor people’s” problem, it is our problem. All major faiths demand us to help those in need whenever we can. In the Bible it says, “[F]aith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.” (James 2:17) It is not enough for our leaders to talk about faith and moral values and at the same time ignore the persistent poverty our faith demands we address.

**Call to Action:** To paraphrase James, all faith and no action is no faith at all. Ending poverty must be “the work” of a government and country that has so much. Will you support ending poverty as a top priority in next year’s budget, by supporting and expanding programs that provide basic health care, education, and food assistance to those in need?

## **THOUGHTS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK**

- Round up impressions and thoughts
- Key takeaway: In the same way Jesus was a student of the synagogue, we are called to be people of a thinking faith.
- Pondering for the week: Can I spend 30 minutes this week reading new information about poverty and hunger in the world?

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Nurturing God,

You have created us as multi-faceted beings. We are beings of spirit, of body, and of mind. Thank you for encouraging us to apply all of these facets to our relationship with you and with humanity.

Don’t let us get away with “checking our brains at the door” of the church. Challenge us to utilize our reason, our logic, and our intelligence to see the problems at hand, to figure out solutions, and to apply them effectively.

Hold us accountable for learning about issues, problem-solving, and teaching others how we can bring justice to life in the lives of those who so desperately need and deserve it.

We ask this, in hope, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## Session 4 — Turning the Ship Through Action

I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can.

— George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman*

### WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS

**James 1:22 (NIV):** “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”

**Study:** James 1:19–27

We know that, as people of faith, our lives are changed because of the love of God. Once our lives are reconciled to God, we find our internal instrumentation to be calibrated differently. We're more in tune with the holy connections between God, self, and other. We see the world differently — as a place where God's economy is at work, where compassion is the true currency, and where hope abounds. Or this is at least the aspiration.

But can all of this adjustment in how we are attuned happen internally without a significant change in our actions?

- *As a Church body, how are we connecting the dots between faith and action?*
- *What kinds of action does our faith require?*

We have already mentioned how good the Church can be at living out ministries of mercy. We know how to feed and clothe, visit and rebuild. But what about calling to account those human systems that purposely or inadvertently chip away at people's dignity, perpetuate disempowerment, and work against human potential?

- *Can you offer examples of such systems?*
- *What do we do in the face of these things?*

In the spirit of examining these systems we must also think about how we respond. After learning more through travel and first hand experience, or by educating ourselves about the systematic issues that contribute to extreme poverty, we can come to a wall, a state of hopelessness, a loss for what to do next, or to a state of paralysis or *inaction*.

- *When you experience hopelessness in fighting the “big” problems in life or with the systems that affect our global family, what actions do you take? How can you as an individual, and/or we as the Church overcome the sense of not being able to make a difference?*
- *What is righteous anger? Have you ever experienced it? What happened?*

Also, how we phrase our views — and how we treat the people we are approaching about these issues — is a key part of our witness and work in the world. What we say matters, both in content and form. We must also frame our responses appropriately.

- *Has there ever been a time when you had a valid point to make to an individual, but your approach to the issue was all wrong and actually damaged your case — or your relationship with that person?*

### CAN WE MAKE A CHANGE?

Part of our responsibility as faithful — and faith-filled — citizens is to speak truth to power respectfully and to articulate our vision of justice and moral priorities. Speaking truth to power is a critical step in lobbying Congress and making changes in key systems that keep poverty in place.

### **TAKE ACTION!**

Learning how to gather the words — and courage — to really act, speaking truth to power, corresponds with Activist Milestone #3, “Write a letter to your member of Congress and get a reply”

Link: <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1359>.

See Faith in Action Health Care Action Sheet: <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=2217>

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK**

- Round up impressions and thoughts
- Key takeaway: Acts of justice in a world that is broken — these are living, breathing, necessary responses to the love God has lavished on us.
- Pondering for the week: Do I have a plan to contact my senators and representatives should I want to speak up on a poverty or hunger issue? (Resource to identify who represents you: <http://capwiz.com/results/dbq/officials/>)

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

**The Serenity Prayer** (by Reinhold Niebuhr)

God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
courage to change the things I can,  
and the wisdom to know the difference.

## Session 5 — Turning the Ship Through Community and Relationship

The commotion of our human life, which lets in everything, all the light and all the music, all the mad tricks of thought and all the variations of pain, the fullness of memory and the fullness of expectation, is closed only to one thing: unity.

— Martin Buber

quoted in *The Silent Cry: Mysticism and Resistance* by Dorothee Soelle

### **WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS**

**Deuteronomy 24:17 (NIV):** “Do not deprive the alien or the fatherless of justice, or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.”

**Study:** Deuteronomy 24:10–22

Contextually, this section of Deuteronomy is dealing with protocol for legal proceedings within the Jewish community. But beyond the specifics of that time and place, we hear echoes of timeless truths about how we treat one another within community. In Matthew Henry’s classic commentary, he explains about verse 17 that “[i]n common pleas between party and party, great care must be taken that none whose cause was just should fare the worse for their weakness.”

One of the most precious functions of a community is the health and safety of its own. More than that, communities can offer access and resources so that people can self-actualize. But before self-actualization can happen, basic justice mechanisms must be set in place.

- *How is our/your community defined? Is anyone excluded? Why?*

We know that the Book of Leviticus proclaims a correction of economic injustices accumulated over time, and there are many who target their displeasure with these inequities through targeted campaigns. For example, RESULTS Domestic spent a significant portion of 2007 focusing on children who have no health insurance. Throughout the Old Testament, mention of “the alien, the fatherless, and the widow” can be found, this trio serving as a symbol of the vulnerable in our society who deserve our protection.

- *What are some of the reasons people resist helping “the alien, the fatherless, and the widow”? Are these reasons actually protective of community, or are they inherently destructive to community?*

In Deuteronomy 24:18, we have a striking verse: “Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you from there. That is why I command you to do this.” In this verse, the Israelite listener is reminded of the freedom granted to him/her by God after a grueling period of enslavement. By freeing the Israelites, God has set in motion a divine chain reaction. That grace and mercy must be reciprocated, not by acts toward God, but by acts toward others who are enslaved in other ways.

- *Are there “prisons” in your life from which you have been freed? What was your response to that freedom? Did it affect your actions toward another? How?*
- *How does the nurturing of freedoms build relationship and connection in your community?*

### **CAN WE MAKE A CHANGE?**

We know one way community and relationship happens . . .

One tool that we have for the positive transformation of life circumstances is called microcredit. Microcredit consists of programs extending small loans, and other financial services such as savings, to very poor people for self-employment projects that generate income, allowing them to care for themselves and their

families. Through institutions like the Nobel Prize-winning Grameen Bank, microcredit is literally transforming lives.

*The local Grameen Bank Center is a hut, about fifteen feet by seven feet: It holds [40] women who sit on the floor in rows — five to a row. Each five-person [borrower] unit represents the primary group for planning and critiquing business ideas. Each five-person unit must approve a loan for one of its members before it is submitted to a larger group. More important, each five-person unit is — as a group — the guarantor of the loan.*

*On the day I was there, the women were . . . sitting, reporting to a loan officer, jumping to their feet, reciting their 16 decisions or pledges.*

*As I watched, I could see something else. I could see the smashing of ancient rules, the shattering of a traditional cannon. I could see subversion. Here's what was being subverted:*

*The belief that poor people are helpless people.*

*The belief that women are the most helpless of all.*

*The belief that poor landless people are terrible credit risks.*

*The belief that poor people cannot cooperate, cannot plan ahead, cannot decide for themselves, cannot manage or service a loan.*

*The belief that a lot of credit is always better than a little credit.*

*The belief that the best form of economic development is aid for massive centralized projects undertaken by the state.*

*The belief that you can build the economy by destroying the earth.*

*If the old beliefs were made of pottery, the floor of the Grameen Bank would be littered with broken shards.*

*Grameen Bank is not based on transactions. It is based on commitment. It deals in something more than contracts. It builds on a compact and business sense.*

*It's the only bank in the world with its own birth control policy. Its members make this pledge: 'We shall plan to keep our families small.'*

*It's the only bank in the world with its own marriage policy. Its members make this pledge: 'We shall keep the center free from the curse of dowry. We shall not practice child marriage.'*

*It's the only bank in the world with its own sanitation policy. Its members make this pledge: 'We shall build and use pit latrines.'*

*Do you begin to see how much can be accomplished if we choose to look at the world in a different way?*

— Peter Goldmark

*If the World Bank Really Wants to Help the Poor . . .* by Joanne Carter and Sam Daley-Harris

### **TAKE ACTION!**

Learning how to connect with — and mobilize — community partners on RESULTS issues so that other communities have a voice and can thrive is a way of building community. This corresponds with Activist Milestone #11, "Speak to a local community group, church, or student group about RESULTS or one of our issues" — <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1362> — and Activist Milestone #12, "Build a network of community allies to take action on specific issues" — <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1363>.

Microcredit is an outstanding example of how community comes together — locally and globally — to create change even within itself and help individuals have a dignified way out of poverty. Who in your community might be interested in learning more about this particular anti-poverty tool? As you brainstorm, explore partner sites like [www.microcreditsummit.org](http://www.microcreditsummit.org) and [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org).

Make a plan to present microcredit to one like-minded group this month.

Create a working list of community partners who might be interested in learning about RESULTS. How can you reach out to them in the next two months?

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK**

- Round up impressions and thoughts
- Key takeaway: Christ has designed us to be a people in community; we must relate to each other and work together to create a world that more closely reflects the will of God.
- Pondering for the week: Where, in my midst, is there a need for a change of living systems in addition to a need for acts of mercy?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

God of our life circle,

While You give us the nourishing gift of solitude, you regularly draw us back into community for accountability, inspiration, and joy. Through each other, we often learn more of You.

Equip us with the fortitude and focus to weave together a communal life that is affirming, and built on a foundation of justice.

Help us to become intolerant only of those actions and systems that deny individuals the freedom to reach for abundant life.

Remind us regularly that the people in our midst are gifts to be cherished, not means to an end or irritants with which we must cope.

Help us shed our attitude of entitlement and, instead, take up the mantle of humble service to one another.

We lift this prayer in our Savior's name. Amen.

## Session 6 — Turning the Ship Through Empowering Citizenship

The Bible is less concerned with alleviating the effects of injustice than in eliminating the causes of it.

— William Sloane Coffin, *Credo* (2004)

### WHAT SCRIPTURE REVEALS

**Micah 6:8 (NIV):** “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

**Study:** Micah 6:1–8

In this passage, the Lord is holding the Israelites to account through the 8th-Century BCE prophet Micah. It’s interesting to note that Micah was known as a champion for the disenfranchised, a champion for justice. The Israelites are in a situation where they have to plead their case. They have to explain why they have behaved in a way that is contrary to God’s leading and God’s commands. God’s acts of faithfulness are recounted, but the Israelites’ responses and choices don’t square up to the mercy and guidance offered to them by God time and time again over the course of their journeys through the Old Testament. Like deer caught in headlights, the people have to reckon with the disconnect between their actions and God’s hopes and expectations for them.

- *Can you relate to the experience of disconnect between God and yourself or God and your community? What was happening there?*

The question is then asked: “What can be done about this?” Is there some sort of offering that can bridge the gap? What can be given or done that will heal the breach between God and the people? In this divine “court of law,” what can be done to make reparations? Or is it more a case of punishment at this point?

- *In that place of disconnect between you and God, what were you feeling? How did you respond to the situation? What did you think your options were?*

The Israelites were used to using ritual traditions to relate to God, to worship God, and to live out their lives of faith. But God was bringing a new expectation, a new “ritual,” into the mix.

Read again Micah 6:8, then read the following story:

*Over twenty years ago, I was a seminary intern in Little Rock, Arkansas. I became active with a group of women who wanted to start a ministry with women prisoners in the Pulaski County Jail. Most of the prisoners were there awaiting trial sometimes there without bond or unable to make bond for quite a long time. Most of these prisoners were young. Most of them were there for prostitution or shoplifting. Most of them had young children. The leader of our group came up with the idea of doing a craft project with these women every week, helping them make something which they could in turn give to their children when they came for visitor days. This was definitely not my idea of a way to do ministry, not my first choice, but it seemed to work. One day, I sat with a woman who was much more adept at this craft project than I, and she said to me, I don’t know why you do this. Why do you come down here and sit with us? I mumbled something about Christian witness and ministry. “No, no,” she said. “All kind of other church groups come down here. They stand outside and they pray over us. You come in here. Why do you do that?” — Rev. Dr. Cynthia McCall Campbell, “Follow the Leader,” 1997 sermon by Cynthia Campbell available at [http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Campbell\\_4028.htm](http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Campbell_4028.htm)*

- *Unpack each of the three key phrases of Micah 6:8: act justly, love mercy, walk humbly. Which actions have you readily seen in your faith community? Which actions do you need to see more of?*

- *Are we a people who are resistant to acting justly, loving mercy, or walking humbly? Is one of these actions tougher than the others? What is the payoff if we avoid this commandment of God? What is the payoff if we live into it?*

### **CAN WE MAKE A CHANGE?**

Micah Challenge is a faith-based initiative that is building awareness and support for the United Nations Millennium Development Goals. Watch their video on YouTube about Micah 6:8.

Link: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=FwnyRCYdKTo>

### **TAKE ACTION!**

Learning how to courageously take the opportunity to bring up issues in a civic, public arena corresponds with Activist Milestone #8, “Ask a question at a town hall meeting or a candidate forum” —

<http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1368>.

One of the ways that global leadership has spoken out for the development and sustainability of the global community is the creation of the Millennium Development Goals. These eight goals, meant to be reached by 2015, will dramatically improve the lives of millions over the long haul, empowering women, men, and children to step out of the deepest level of poverty and build a healthier, more fulfilling life. Explore the possibilities of getting involved — and speaking truth to power — through the MDG outreach packet available at <http://www.results.org/website/download.asp?id=2966>.

Take some time as a group to brainstorm together what venues and opportunities you have in your community for raising hunger and poverty issues and for creating dialogue with candidates and leaders.

### **THOUGHTS FOR THE UPCOMING WEEK**

- Round up impressions and thoughts
- Key takeaway: We are called to respect our citizenship and our leaders by engaging with them responsibly, reliably, and effectively.
- Pondering for the week: How do I balance my personal faith, its public expression, the diversity of our nation, and the requirements of participatory democracy?

### **CLOSING PRAYER**

God of righteousness,

Scripture teaches us to have appropriate respect for the leaders of our world. This respect requires us to be engaged with that leadership, to be full participants in our communities. Help us to embrace that role in a way that respects differences of background, opinion, and belief. Help us be discerning, loving, brave, and wise. Empower us to bring our faith perspective to civic dialogue in a way that is life-giving to everyone.

We lift these things up in Christ’s name. Amen.

# Final Session — Turning the Ship: What Now?

True heroism is remarkably sober, very undramatic. It is not the urge to surpass all others at whatever cost, but the urge to serve others, at whatever cost.

— Arthur Ashe

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27,000 children under five still die daily from preventable diseases, culminating in a loss of 9.7 million children each year.

— UNICEF

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In 2006, over 36 million U.S. citizens lived in poverty

— U.S. Census Bureau

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Now is a genesis moment, not simply the end of a study. We invite you move forward with full intention, help turn the ship, and bring us closer to the day when the deepest poverty is a memory and the world around us is a closer reflection of the Christ we serve.

To that end, we hope that RESULTS can partner with you. Take this week to review and process what you have covered together on this journey. Brainstorm next steps. Craft a message about what this curriculum has meant for your group members, collectively and individually, and think about how you can share that message with others in your church and community.

Some next options to consider:

- Is there a RESULTS global or domestic group in your area?
- If there is not a group in your area, would you like RESULTS to help you start one?
- Have you signed up for the RESULTS Action Network? (This is an e-mail alert network to keep you on top key actions you can take to affect the legislative process immediately.) Here's the link to sign up! <http://capwiz.com/results/mlm/signup/>

Check out your first, best resource for getting plugged into RESULTS ([www.results.org](http://www.results.org)), linking to "Activist Info." There, you will find the information you need to take action on the current year's campaigns.

It has been our privilege to be on this journey with you; let's hope it's just the beginning!

## **PRAYER OF BENEDICTION** (adapted from work by e. e. cummings)

We thank You God for this most amazing day, for the leaping greenly trees, for the blue true dream of sky, for the birth of life and love and wings, for the great happening of the illimitable earth.

Now our ears are opened. Now we are awake. Help us be a grateful people, a merciful people, a passionate and active people who refuse to accept the hunger of children, the poverty of body and spirit that infects and squelches millions.

Make us changers of systems so that a new world is not merely possible, but is here.

It is in the name of Jesus — Teacher, Savior, Friend, and Champion — that we pray. Amen.

**If you would like to join us in making a difference to the billions of people living in hunger and poverty around the world, please contact us today!**

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[results@results.org](mailto:results@results.org)

# Social Justice Resources

## Groups

### Results Faith in Action webpage

Check it out for a wealth of links to denominational and ecumenical social justice efforts.

<http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=1836>

### Bread for the World

Find out about Bread for the World's advocacy work, including how your church can be involved with the Offering of Letters on hunger and poverty related issues, at [www.bread.org](http://www.bread.org).

### Church World Service's *Making Poverty History*

This booklet contains simulations, skits, and worship materials that congregations or groups can use to lift up the issues of hunger, poverty, and the Millennium Development Goals.

Download at <http://www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet/>

### JustFaith Ministries

Organization that offers workshops and programs that empower people and expand commitment to social ministry within faith communities.

[www.justfaith.org](http://www.justfaith.org)

### Jubilee

Global faith-based campaign for debt cancellation in developing nations

U.S. Site: [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org), (202) 783-3566

### Micah Challenge

Global Christian campaign for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals

International Site: [www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org)

U.S. Site: [www.micahchallenge.us](http://www.micahchallenge.us), (800) 822-7323 x117

### National Council of Churches USA's *Eradicating Global Poverty: A Christian Study Guide on the Millennium Development Goals*

This study is authored by Lallie B. Lloyd (Friendship Press, 2006)

Find at [www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org)

### The ONE Campaign

Partner organization that helps build awareness and action on poverty issues.

[www.one.org/faith](http://www.one.org/faith)

U.S. Senate — Find out who represents you!

[www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

U.S. House of Representatives — Find out who represents you!

[www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov)

## Video Resource List

You are encouraged to utilize videos, in whole or in clips, from this list for the “Can We Make a Change?” section. Please make sure your group has proper licensing permission to show videos in your venue. Go to [www.cvli.com](http://www.cvli.com) for more information.

1. *RESULTS Everyday Heroes*, video link available at [www.results.org](http://www.results.org) or <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=6643097997069281250&pr=goog-sl&hl=en>
2. PBS clip available on RESULTS website where you can hear directly from founder Sam Daley-Harris about why RESULTS got started by a regular citizen moving from hopelessness to action. <http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=439>
3. *Yesterday*, Oscar Nominated for Best Foreign Film for 2005 tells the story of a family’s struggle with HIV/AIDS. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0419279/>
4. *Making America Stronger: U.S. Food Stamp Program* video from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <http://www.cbpp.org/foodstamp-video.htm>
5. *Lalee’s Kin*, 2001 Oscar Nominated Documentary about the Mississippi Delta and the poverty that still exists in the United States today. <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0274622/>
6. *The Girl in the Cafe*, film about an unlikely couple who might just change history when given the opportunity to talk to global leadership at the G8 Summit. It challenges ordinary citizens to think “What can I do to affect change?” <http://www.hbo.com/films/girlinthecafe/>
7. *Small Fortunes — Microcredit and the Future of Poverty*, One hour PBS documentary that describes the impact of microcredit throughout the world. <http://www.pbs.org/kbyu/smallfortunes/>
8. *Time for School*, PBS documentary that profiles the struggle for Basic Education in 7 countries. <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/wideangle/shows/school/>
9. *Coming to Say Goodbye — Stories of AIDS in Africa*. [http://www.olddogdocumentaries.com/vid\\_ctsg.html](http://www.olddogdocumentaries.com/vid_ctsg.html)

Also, visit [www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=2559](http://www.results.org/website/article.asp?id=2559) for more videos to stimulate group conversation.

## Helpful Hints for the Curriculum Facilitator

- You are encouraged to utilize videos, in whole or in clips, from this list for the “Can We Make a Change?” section. Please make sure your group has proper licensing permission to show videos in your venue. Go to [www.cvli.com](http://www.cvli.com) for more information.
- Refer to the social justice resources early on — they might relate to the week’s pondering.
- Find out ahead of time if there is a RESULTS domestic or global group in your area. The group leader could be an excellent resource, and participants in your study group may want to get connected.
- Create a plan for refreshments and other ways to “warm up” the meeting space.
- Try setting out just a couple fewer chairs than you expect to need — a room full of chairs for only a small group can feel demoralizing or impersonal, but excitement is generated when there are enough people to need more chairs.
- Allow people to pass on their turn to speak.
- Don’t be afraid of silences. Allow people to think and form their responses.
- Start on time. End on time.
- Look through the entire lesson a few days ahead so you can fill any tech needs, provide printouts, etc.
- Don’t hesitate to contact RESULTS if we can be of help as you move through the curriculum or if we can provide you with materials, resources, or advice.

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Additional references: Materials and information from RESULTS ([www.results.org](http://www.results.org)), Micah Challenge ([www.micahchallenge.org](http://www.micahchallenge.org)), Jubilee USA ([www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org)), and the Microcredit Summit Campaign ([www.microcreditsummit.org](http://www.microcreditsummit.org)); [www.ibs.org](http://www.ibs.org)/niv (New International Version® International Bible Society Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984)

Bible study research gleaned from materials from the Center for Worship Resourcing of the General Board of Discipleship (Copyright © 2006 The General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church — [www.umcworship.org](http://www.umcworship.org)), “Follow the Leader,” 1997 sermon by Cynthia Campbell (available at [http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Campbell\\_4028.htm](http://www.csec.org/csec/sermon/Campbell_4028.htm)), *Matthew Henry Complete Commentary on the Whole Bible* (available at [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com)), Revised Common Lectionary Commentary on Micah 6:1–8 by Chris Haslam (Copyright © 1997–2005, available at <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/apr04m.shtml?>), [www.socialjusticelectionary.com](http://www.socialjusticelectionary.com), [www.lectionary.org](http://www.lectionary.org)

# Evaluation Sheet

Please rate the components of the curriculum

*Check description that most reflects your experience with each part of the curriculum*

Activity/Resource	Beneficial	Neutral	Not Beneficial
RESULTS overview			
Introduction Week			
“What Scripture Reveals” sections			
“Can We Make a Change?” sections			
“Take Action!” sections			
“Going into the Week” sections			
Social Justice Resources			
Video Resources			
Pace of Curriculum			
Theme of Curriculum			
Curriculum Accessibility and Format			

What improvements could we make?

What portions should we definitely keep?

Would you recommend this curriculum to others? Why or why not?

*Thank you taking the time to complete this survey! Please return this form to [jlinn@results.org](mailto:jlinn@results.org) or to RESULTS/RESULTS Ed. Fund, Attn: Faith in Action, P.O. Box 41154, Des Moines, IA 50311*