

Suggested Format for M&M Hunger Banquet

Objective: Provide a visual example of the distribution of the world's food and wealth and stimulate discussion among students about fairness and justice.

Supplies: M&Ms and 3 bowls

Overview: Divide students into three groups (based on percentages below) to represent high-income countries, middle-income countries and low-income countries. Put an empty bowl in front of each group for the M&Ms. Statistics come from Bread for the World Institute research.

High income (also called "First World Countries" or "Developed Countries")

Number of students: about 17 percent of your total group's size

Number of M&Ms: 50 per person

Middle Income

Number of students: about 25 percent of your total group's size

Number of M&Ms: 7 per person

Low Income (also called "Third World Countries" or "Developing Countries")

Number of students: about 57 percent of your total group's size

Number of M&Ms: 1 for every 3 people

Explain that the 3 groups represent high-income, middle-income and low-income countries. Describe each group (see descriptions below). After each description, pour the M&Ms into the group's bowl and explain that this represents the amount of food the group gets. (Ask students to eat when the exercise is over – and do not even out the M&Ms later but allow them to share if they choose to do so without prompting).

Group 1: The richest countries

- * You make up 15% of the world's population.
- * Average income per person is about \$8,900 a year.
- * Includes countries like the U.S., Canada, Japan, England.
- * Not many children die in these countries.
- * The average person lives to age 76; the leading causes of death (in the U.S.) are heart disease and diabetes
- * You get more than you need; you receive over 130% of your daily minimum food requirements
- * While still millions of people, most women and children, in your countries live below the poverty line
- * Your government has a multi-billion dollar defense budget

Group 2: The middle-income countries

- * You make up 28% of the world's population.

- * Includes countries like Poland, Thailand, Phillipines, Israel, Argentina, Korea).
- * Many in your group do not get enough.
- * Your countries have a smaller middle class than the first group; if you are a wealthy person, you are probably very wealthy in comparison to the rest of the population.
- * The infant mortality rate is 8 times higher for you than in group 1.
- * People live to an average age of 61.
- * The debt burden your county faces is crippling your economy.

Group 3: The poorest countries

- * You make up 57% of the world's population.
- * Average income between \$60-\$440 per year (that's only \$1.20/day at most).
- * Includes countries like Haiti, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Mexico, Kenya, El Salvador, Honduras and India.
- * You are either a land-less laborer or a peasant who must pay rent for the land you farm; if you are a peasant, you pay rent by giving the landlord as much as 75% of your harvest – leaving you and your family with less than what you need to make it.
- * Many people go hungry every day.
- * Your drinking water is contaminated, so lots of people get sick and die.
- * The average person lives to age 60.
- * The debt that your government has accrued makes your problems worse.

Discussion Questions

1. For Group 1: How does it feel to have so much food, especially when others do not?
2. For Group 3: How do you feel about the people in the wealthy group? What would you want them to do?
3. Is this distribution fair? Why or why not? What would make it fair?
4. If you lived in the poorest group, what are some other things you may not have besides food?
5. Why do a small number of people have so much, and a large number of people have so little? What causes hunger?
6. What do you think God feels about these inequalities? What do you think God would want us to do about them? How will he judge us? How does God want the world to be?

Scripture: Luke 4:18-19