

## ***Leader Resource 2-2: Optional Meal for Unit 2 Sharing Wholesome Foods***

If you wish to eat together this week, try either the Adventure Potluck or the Wholesome Foods Banquet below.

### ***The Adventure Potluck***

This meal gives you the opportunity to convert each other to new, healthy foods. It may also inspire you to rethink your approach to the time-honored tradition of potlucks in the future. A “healthy potluck” is a contradiction in terms in most settings! On the other hand, even healthy potlucks have perils: the more choices, the more people eat. If your group struggles with weight issues, opt for the Wholesome Foods banquet instead.

#### ***Before the Meal***

- Ask each person to bring a healthy food that he or she enjoys eating.
- Also invite participants to bring copies of recipes, favorite healthy cookbooks or information on healthy places to shop.

#### ***During the Meal***

- Take turns sharing stories about the foods on the table. Ask:  
    Why is this food good for us?  
    How did you learn to enjoy it?
- Thank each person for his or her offering.

### ***The Wholesome Foods Banquet***

It is not the richness of the food that makes this meal a banquet: it is the variety of fruits and vegetables served up. The suggested menu, found below, includes a fruit salad and a vegetable stew. The stew can be served over brown rice or whole wheat couscous. This meal includes over 20 plant foods, each packed with its own unique combination of vitamins and phytochemicals.

A suggested recipe and a script mentioning specific foods is provided for this meal. If you do not think your group would enjoy this recipe, you can substitute a vegetable-rich stew from your own tradition or alter the spices used. You will need to alter the script to fit your food.

#### ***Before the meal***

- Ask for volunteers willing to prepare a fruit salad, a pot of stew, a pot of rice, or couscous.
- Make copies of the recipe on page 36 for them to use.
- Become familiar with the script on pages 37-38 so that you can read it smoothly. If you are altering the suggested ingredients, make the appropriate changes in the script.

#### ***During the meal***

- Slowly read the script on pages 37-38 while people are eating. The goal is to help people eat slowly, savor their food, and learn more about the nutrients they are eating.

- Discuss: Does this food appeal to you? What barriers might prevent you from eating this way on a regular basis?

### **Suggested Menu**

Algerian Stew served over brown rice or whole wheat couscous  
Mixed fruit salad

### **Algerian Stew with Chicken or Chickpeas**

Adapted from *The Garden Variety Cookbook* by Sarah Schlesinger

Serves 8

Preparation time: 25 min.    Cooking time: 30 minutes

4 T. olive oil  
2 medium onions, sliced  
4 cloves garlic, minced  
2 T. ground cumin  
1 t. ground cinnamon  
1/4 t. cayenne pepper or more to taste  
4 c. chopped fresh or canned tomatoes, drained  
4 carrots cut in 1-inch pieces  
2 c. cauliflower florets  
2 bell peppers, seeded, cut in 1-inch pieces  
2 medium turnips, peeled and cubed  
2 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut in 1-inch pieces  
1 1/2 c. low salt chicken broth or vegetable stock  
3 c. drained, cooked chick peas (garbanzo beans) **or** 2 lbs. chicken breasts cut in 1" strips  
2 medium zucchini, sliced  
1 c. seedless raisins  
6 T. chopped fresh parsley  
2 apples, peeled and cored

1. Heat the olive oil in a heavy soup pot over medium heat. Sauté onion and garlic for 5 minutes until tender.
2. Stir in cumin, cinnamon, and cayenne. Mix well.
3. Add tomatoes, carrots, celery, cauliflower, pepper, turnip, broth, chick peas. Bring to a boil, reduce heat; and simmer 20 minutes.
4. If you are adding chicken instead of chickpeas, add it now and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Add zucchini and raisins. Cook 5 minutes more.
6. Stir apple and parsley into stew just before eating. Serve over whole-wheat couscous or brown rice.

### **Brown Rice or Whole Wheat Couscous**

Couscous is a pasta-like wheat product made from coarsely ground wheat. It can be found in the rice section of most grocery stores. The nice thing about couscous is that it cooks in five minutes. Follow directions on the package. If you use brown rice, remember that it needs to cook longer than white rice: about 45 minutes. Follow the directions on the package.

### **Fruit Salad**

Make a mixed fruit salad containing at least seven different kinds of fruits. The fruits mentioned in the script below are strawberries, blueberries, and kiwi, but you can alter the script. Consider local availability, what's in season, and ethnic preferences. To find nutritional information on other fruits, try [www.askdrsears.com](http://www.askdrsears.com) and click on the family nutrition link. Or see [www.healthalternatives2000.com](http://www.healthalternatives2000.com).

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## Options

- Omit items you can't find or substitute other vegetables in the stew. Alter the script below to fit your changes.
- To make the chopping and peeling go faster, have a few volunteers meet beforehand to prepare the stew and fruit salad together. Reorganize the lesson plan so that the stew can cook during the first part of your group. If cost of fresh vegetables is an issue, divide up the ingredient list among volunteers or pool funds to reimburse the shopper.
- Buy extra fruits or vegetables to make a colorful centerpiece for your table.
- Note that Leader Resource 3-10, page 56, shows the distances the food traveled when the author made a similar meal. The Wholesome Foods Banquet does not focus on this point, but since the menu is the same, this handout may be of interest. If you are not doing a meal with Units 3 or 4, you may wish to use Leader Resource 3-10 now.

## Script for Wholesome Foods Banquet

*After everyone has a plate of stew, read through the instructions below. Be careful not to rush.*

Please listen and attend to your food rather than talking to your neighbor during this meal. We will eat in silence.

Spend a minute looking at the stew on your plate... Notice the colors of the food... If you can identify some of the vegetables, imagine what they looked like before they were chopped. Picture them growing on a healthy green plant... Give thanks for this meal.

Now spend a minute working with your nose. What spices can you distinguish? How would you describe the aroma of this food? Does it appeal to you?

Listen to your stomach. Are you hungry? Or are you just eating because it is mealtime and everyone else is eating? Pay attention to what your stomach tells you.

Slowly pick up your fork and taste a small bite of the stew. Choose the mouthful that looks tastiest to you. Chew slowly and take the time to savor this bite. Choose another morsel that looks especially good to you and take the time to savor it.

Now choose a piece of **tomato** and chew it slowly. This native of South and Central America is one of the most nutrient-dense foods we know of. It contains as many as 4,000 different phytonutrients and is rich in potassium and vitamin A. Potassium is essential to proper heart function and helps maintain water balance within cells. Vitamin A is needed for vision, bone growth, healthy skin, hair, and mucous membranes.

Tomatoes get their color from lycopene, a pigment that has been shown to protect men against prostate cancer. Enjoy this bite of tomato and imagine it nourishing your body.

Find a bite of **cauliflower** on your plate and chew it slowly. Reflect on its distinctive flavor. Cauliflower is in the crucifer family, whose members are all good sources of cancer-fighting agents. This vegetable gives you vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, phosphorus, and folic acid.

Now spear a **sweet potato** and take a moment to admire its rich orange color. Let it dissolve in your mouth. One sweet potato gives you double your daily requirement of vitamin A and a good dose of potassium, calcium, and ascorbic acid.

Notice the **chickpeas** in your stew. These power-packed veggies give you protein without adding saturated fat to your diet. A half cup serving of chickpeas gives you 29% of your daily protein requirement. Chickpeas are also a good source of fiber, folate, and manganese.

*Omit if serving couscous:*

For your next bite, select a small forkful of **brown rice**. Chew it slowly and enjoy the texture. Today, six out of ten people in the world are eating rice. In China and Japan the word for rice also means “meal.”

The brown rice you are eating still contains the germ and bran layers of this grain. It has more vitamins, minerals, amino acids, and fiber than white rice. Brown rice is especially rich in fiber. A high fiber diet prevents digestive problems. It is also linked to lower cholesterol, lower risk of heart attack, and reduced risk of certain cancers.

*Omit if serving brown rice:*

For your next bite, select a small forkful of **couscous**. Chew it slowly and enjoy the texture. Couscous is a pasta-like wheat product made from coarsely ground wheat. It is originally from North Africa but can be found in the rice section of most grocery stores today. Whole wheat contains 13 B vitamins, vitamin E, and protein. B vitamins help your body cells convert carbohydrates into energy. A deficiency of vitamin B1 makes you tired.

Now try your fruit salad.

Start with a vivid red **strawberry**. Strawberries are high in fiber, vitamin A, and vitamin C. Enjoy the texture and flavor.

The **blueberries** in your fruit salad have made news in the last few years. They have the highest antioxidant capacity of all fresh fruits and vegetables tested. Antioxidants protect your cells from free radicals: byproducts of the body’s metabolism that can be damaging. Blueberries are also high in vitamin C, vitamin K, and manganese. Vitamin K plays a role in blood clotting and regulates calcium in the blood.

The **kiwi** in your fruit salad is a significant source of vitamin C and copper. You need copper to form red blood cells and supply oxygen to the body.

Take a moment to listen to your stomach again. Are you as hungry as you were when you started eating? Finish your meal at your own pace, continuing to pay attention to the tastes and smells of your food. When you are no longer hungry, stop eating even if there is food on your plate.

# Unit 3

## Hunger

*This will be your fourth session. Group members were asked to read Unit 3 in the Participant Book before attending, but can still fit in and learn even if they have not.*

### **Quick Overview of this Session**

- Hear the stories of the hungry through a *lectio divina* exercise that employs both ancient and modern voices. (20-25 minutes)
- Hear the stories of the hungry by examining our own memories. (Time included above)
- Experience the reality of hunger by sharing the cheapest bread and beverage available. (Time included above)
- Learn about people who are working against hunger and reflect on the ways their work addresses the root causes of hunger. (25-30 minutes)
- Imagine ways individuals in your group might respond to hunger. (10-15 minutes)

### **Key Ideas**

- Hunger is a spiritual problem, not an inevitable consequence of limited resources. The UN calls it a lack of political will. Jesus might have called it a rejection of servant leadership.
- Root causes of hunger include poverty, powerlessness, debt, violence and militarism, increasing populations, environmental degradation, economic globalization, and AIDS.
- Many wise and compassionate people are working against hunger. They offer us signs of hope and welcome our help.
- Faith practices and lifestyle choices that remember the hungry can open the door for God's Spirit to move in surprising ways.

### **Important Questions**

- What is the closest *you've* ever come to hunger?
- Why are people hungry? Would you agree with the introduction in the Participant Book that says there is enough food for all, but not all people can afford it?
- Which of the root causes of hunger have you witnessed or experienced? What would you add to the list?
- What responses to hunger do you find most authentic? If you had a year of your life to give to those who are hungry, how would you spend it?

### **Advance Preparation**

- Buy a loaf of the cheapest bread you can find and prepare a pitcher of Kool-Aid or other inexpensive powdered drink to serve during the *lectio divina* exercise. You will also need cups and napkins.
- Each person will need a copy of this week's *lectio divina* from Lamentations (pages 16-17) and a slip with a comment or story from someone who is hungry today. These are found on Leader Resource 3-1, pages 43-44. Make one copy and cut it apart.
- If you choose to do option 2, copy the first person accounts by people who work against hunger on Leader Resources 3-3 to 3-7, pages 47-51.