

# Hunger Awareness Simulation

**purpose:** to give people a different perspective on hunger, helplessness and responsibility. This simulation is a dramatic representation of oppression and helping others.

**How it works:** After the directions are given, each student will:

1. Squat on the ground with eyes closed, on the balls of their feet (Facilitator should clearly demonstrate this)
2. The facilitator reads the attached story, while the students listen in SILENCE.
3. During the story, facilitators will tap various students
  - a. If tapped once: they may stand, but must keep their eyes closed
  - b. If tapped again: they may open their eyes, and assist the facilitator in tapping other students. Each player is only allowed to tap ONE other player.
4. Immediately before reading the story the facilitator should say something to the effect of: "the silence begins now, please squat down."

**Note to reader:** It is important to be very familiar with the story and have read it over a few times before. In order for this simulation to be effective the story must flow smoothly and be paced correctly; not too fast, but not too slow (especially for younger students).



### The Story:

Try to empty your head. Forget about what we have been talking about, your friend next to you, the things that are going to happen today. Forget about any problems that you might have carried with you into the room for just a few moments. Forget about all the millions of little things that you think about during the day before you go to sleep tonight. Allow yourself to relax. Take a deep breath if you need to.

(Wait about a minute here)

Now, try to think about something pleasant. Think about your school, how you are treated and the vast amount of possibilities and opportunities that you have. Can you go to a movie? Can you afford a new pair of shoes? Do you have a warm coat? Do you have a big house or a small one? What TV shows will you watch? Can you talk on the telephone to your friends? What is life like for you? Will you go to college? Where do you want to go? What do you want to be?

Choices . . . Decisions. Who will you spend your next vacation with? With your friends? With your family? Think of your day so far. Think for just one minute about what you ate. Did you have breakfast? What will you have for lunch? For dinner? Did you get what your body needs? Did you get enough protein, carbohydrates, and fats? Could you eat a well-balanced meal if you chose to?

(Pause a moment or two, begin tapping people slowly)

As most of you already know, there is hunger all over the world. It has been going on for a long time. A huge number of people literally starving to death – slowly, painfully, right now. They don't have many choices. They'll never go to college.

They'll never face your decisions. Often even the choice for life is taken away. The quality of life is not even an issue when you're trying to survive merely until tomorrow. One more day, still hoping that help will come. Although they may not know it, they share their pain with millions of others all over the world. They feel isolated and alone in their pain. People in Africa. People in South America. People in Mexico. People in the United States. People in Oregon. People in ( \_\_\_\_insert name of town here \_\_\_\_). In fact, they share their poverty and destitution with people everywhere on the face of this small planet. AND IT DOESN'T GO AWAY . . .

It hurts in the very center of their being. It hurts mentally and physically. They feel it in their legs when they cramp up because they do not get enough of the right food and it is painful. And they wonder if it will ever end. Sometimes they see people in pain. They see people who stand free and strong but who are completely blind to what is happening around them. They cannot see the suffering and the pain of

those around them. They are ignorant to what is happening around them, these people are blind but the others see. They continue to wonder if the pain will ever stop. If this life will never end.

Some of you have already been touched. You have experienced the presence of a hand that has eliminated your pain. Some of you have been touched twice. You are not only out of pain, but you are fully awake with your eyes open. You see, without question, those who are in pain. You see their want of a touch that will relieve them of their pain. You begin to slowly realize how important a single touch can be. You realize the power that a single touch can have. With a single touch, you can relieve the pain of one who suffers, and open up the eyes of one who is blind. And you realize the freedom you have to move, to choose. You are free to touch someone, and we are all free to touch the hungry and less advantaged people of the world and in our community.

(All students may stand at this time . . . many will need to stretch and take a moment)

#### **Discussion Questions:**

1. How did it feel to squat?
2. How did you feel when you were tapped? If you weren't tapped, how did that make you feel?
3. How did this activity make you feel?
4. Did anyone squatting have the urge to stand up? To sit down? To open their eyes?
5. Did anyone stand up, sit down, or open their eyes who weren't touched?
6. What could be the symbolic meaning of breaking these rules? Do hungry people have this option?
7. When did you stop focusing on the story and only concentrate on your own pain?
8. What did you feel when your eyes were closed and we were talking about blindness?
9. What role does the person who taps people play? Who actually touches the hungry people of the world?
10. What do you think each group symbolizes? (standing with eyes closed, standing with eyes open, squatting with eyes closed, eyes open and touching people)
11. Where do you think you are in one of the groups? (indicate answer by raising hands)
12. Did you feel mad or angry after this activity? How will it affect you?