

FED WITH JESUS' HOPE

Children's message by Sonya VanderVeen Feddema

(Props: Bottle of liquid soap and a wand for blowing bubbles; small compost bucket filled with biodegradable material.)

Today we are going to think about different ways we can help feed hungry people.

If you knew people who were really hungry, what is the first thing you would do to make them feel better? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* That's right! You would give them something to eat. Maybe you would share your lunch or ask your parents to buy them food.

When people are really hungry, they feel weak. But once they have something to eat, how do they feel? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* You're right! Stronger! When they eat the food they've been given, they have strength for one day or, maybe, two. But what if they don't have food for the next day and the day after that? What happens then? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* That's right! They feel weak again.

Do you think children like yourselves feel happy, or can learn well in school, or have lots of energy to run and play when they are weak with hunger? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* You're right! They don't feel happy. They can't learn well. And they don't have much energy.

Sometimes people who are weak from hunger lose hope. Does anyone know what hope is? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* Hope is wanting and expecting things in our lives to be better. Hungry people don't only hope for food. They hope their children can go to good schools and become educated. Needy children hope to learn to read and write, and that their dreams for the future will come true.

I want to show you what it's like for people to lose hope. *(Storyteller holds up the bottle of liquid soap and the wand.)* What have I got here? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* You're right! It's a bottle of soap for blowing bubbles. Who would like to blow bubbles? *(Storyteller allows a volunteer to blow bubbles.)* What happens to the bubbles when they float away? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* You're right! They burst! They're gone! That's kind of like losing hope. Maybe people had a home, food, and a field for growing crops, but then war came, or drought, or floods and then they lost everything. Their hope is gone. The same thing could happen to a child who goes to school and has a dream of being a doctor or teacher when she grows up. Maybe her mommy or daddy got sick, or maybe she had to stop going to school so she could take care of her brothers and sisters, or to earn money. Her hope of a different life would disappear just like the bubbles did. That's what happens to many people in the world who eventually become very hungry.

How can we help hungry people get back the hope that their lives will become better? I'm going to tell you something that might surprise you. To help people get back their hope, we need to feed them, feed the soil, and feed their hearts. When there has been a drought, a war, or other disaster, we have to give people food for a day, or two, or a month to get them through the hard times. We also have to feed the soil. When we feed the soil, we help hungry people get their hope back. That sounds strange, doesn't it? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* Does the soil have a mouth? Does it have a stomach? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* Of course not! So, how can you feed the soil to make it better so it can grow more food to feed more hungry people? *(Storyteller opens the lid of the compost bucket and shows old apple cores, vegetable scraps, and other biodegradable material.)* What have I got inside this compost bucket? *(Storyteller allows the children to answer.)* That's right! Garbage! But did you know that when you feed garbage like this – compost – to the soil, it makes the soil richer and helps it to grow more food?

In countries where people are hungry, groups like the Canadian Foodgrains Bank and CRWRC are teaching people how to feed the soil and to take care of it so that it will produce more food for hungry people. That way, families can grow more food and won't be as likely to be hungry again in the future. That's one way of following God's command to take care of His earth.

Feeding people. Feeding the soil. Those are two ways to care for people in need. The last way is by feeding their hearts. Even when we have enough food to eat, we can sometimes lose our hope. But when we remember that Jesus loves us, we are able to be hopeful even when things are scary or sad. To many people, the help that CRWRC provides does just that. When they realize that someone loved them enough to send them food, or to teach them to be better farmers, they feel encouraged. Sometimes they ask the people who work for CRWRC why people in Canada care about them. The answer they are given is that Jesus loves us and Jesus loves them. Jesus knows that we all need to be fed with His hope.

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