



A Discussion Guide for People of Faith Session 1: Enough of the Basics in Life

THEME:

All people have basic human needs that need to be met in order for us to reach our potential. Ending poverty means ensuring that all have the opportunity and ability to meet those needs for themselves and their families. This session will explore the nature of these needs, what our role might be in ensuring these basics and determining needs versus wants.

We believe it is the Creator's intent that all people are provided those things that protect human dignity and make for a healthy life: adequate food and shelter, meaningful work, safe communities, healthcare, and education.

Common Foundation: Shared Principles for Overcoming Poverty (1st principle), 2004



2423 Park Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55404 * 612-310-9560

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Breaking the Ice:

Boundary Breaker Activity

Goal: The goal of this activity is to create an atmosphere of active listening and honest sharing.

Materials: None

Directions: Ask participants to arrange their chairs in a tight circle, ensuring that no one is seated outside the circle. Begin the process by asking each member to share their name, ensuring that first names of participants are written large enough on name tags for all to see.

The group leader will ask a question and members will respond in turn, moving clockwise around the circle. Advise members to answer briefly and move around the circle relatively quickly; there is no need to explain their responses. Advise the group to refrain from interrupting or offering comments or questions to others' responses. This is not a time for debate or discussion but for listening.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR: Group leaders should manage the time carefully to ensure that the second set of questions (the Synthesis Set) is not omitted. Note that there may be more questions listed than can be used. In this case, those listed in italics can be used first. If your group is large, you may want to consider breaking into two separate groups and asking for a volunteer to serve as an additional group leader.

PART ONE – Structured Conversation

1. What is the best movie you've ever seen?
2. Who is someone who has had great impact on your life?
3. What is the most beautiful quality about people?
4. What is the most sacred thing in your life?
5. Why did you choose to talk about enough?
6. What do you have enough of?
7. What is the most important thing to have enough of?
8. If you could travel to any place in the world, where would you go first?
9. What do you do when you see someone in need?
10. What do you think is your greatest strength?
11. What would you like to put on your gravestone?
12. What color is love?
13. If you could choose to be any other animal aside from human, what animal would you choose to be?
14. What do you want to be doing ten years from now?

15. What is your favorite TV show of all time?

PART TWO- Synthesis

In light of the answers given by group members in Part One, ask members to respond to the following:

1. Which person did you learn most about?
2. Which persons do you want to learn more about?
3. Which answer prompted you to want to ask further questions?
4. Which answers surprised you the most?
5. Which person seemed to answer in ways similar to you?
6. Which persons seem to enjoy their life?

Our Traditions Speak:

Exodus 16:1-21—Manna in the Wilderness

The whole congregation of the Israelites set out from Elim; and Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'

Then the LORD said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather on other days.' So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, 'In the evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your complaining against the LORD. For what are we, that you complain against us?' And Moses said, 'When the LORD gives you meat to eat in the evening and your fill of bread in the morning, because the LORD has heard the complaining that you utter against him—what are we? Your complaining is not against us but against the LORD.'

Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the LORD, for he has heard your complaining." 'And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud. The LORD spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; then you shall know that I am the LORD your God." '

In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, 'What is it?' For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, 'It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. This is what the LORD has commanded: "Gather as much of it as each of you needs, an omer to a person according to the number of persons, all providing for those in their own tents." ' The Israelites did so, some gathering more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, those who gathered much had nothing over, and those who gathered little had no shortage; they gathered as much as each of them needed. And Moses said to them, 'Let no one leave any of it over until morning.' But they did not listen to Moses; some left part of it until morning, and it bred worms and became foul. And Moses was angry with them. Morning by morning they gathered it, as much as each needed; but when the sun grew hot, it melted.

Matthew 6:25-33—Consider the lilies; do not keep worrying

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

The Qur’an 2:57-61 – GOD’s blessings upon the Children of Israel—not enough!

“And WE shaded you with clouds and sent down to you manna and quails. ‘Eat of the good things that WE provided for you’...”

“And when Moses prayed for water for his people, WE said, ‘Strike the rock with your staff!’ And from it gushed forth twelve springs, and every tribe knew its watering place. ‘Eat and drink from what GOD provided, and do not cause mischief and corruption in the land.’”

“Then you said, ‘O Moses, we cannot endure just one kind of food. So call upon your LORD to bring forth earth’s produce for us: its green herbs, its cucumbers, its garlic, its lentils, and its onions.’ He said, ‘Would you exchange that which is better for that which is inferior? Go down to Egypt, and you shall have what you asked for!’...”

Luke 9:10-17—Feeding of the 5000

On their return the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured.

The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, ‘Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.’ But he said to them, ‘You give them something to eat.’ They said, ‘We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.’ For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, ‘Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.’ They did so and made them all sit down. And

taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Hadeeth – GOD provides sufficiently for our basic needs as long as...

“If you relied on GOD with rightfully due reliance, HE would provide sustenance for you, just as HE provides sustenance for the birds; they leave in the morning hungry, and they return in the evening full and satiated.”

Wisdom in our World:

Common Foundation: Shared Principles for Overcoming Poverty (1st principle), 2004.

We believe it is the Creator's intent that all people are provided those things that protect human dignity and make for a healthy life: adequate food and shelter, meaningful work, safe communities, healthcare, and education.

Jim Jordal, "Enough for All," 11/17/10 (posted Nov 17, 2010 on www.mnwithoutpoverty.org)

The phrase "Enough for All" is the theme of the coming Statewide Gathering to End Poverty by 2020, taking place on December 9, 2010 at five different sites in Minnesota. Sponsored by A Minnesota Without Poverty, the event features several prominent speakers as well as something new—an art exhibition and artistic performances to portray the concept of *enough* in new and exciting ways. The final event of the gathering will be table conversations entitled "Let's Talk About Enough."

In common usage the term *enough* denotes adequacy or sufficiency to fulfill a need or desire. The difficulty arises when we attempt to separate *need* from *desire*. Need relates to survival and human decency while desire arises more from narcissistic attempts to gratify the human ego.

Played out upon the world stage this conflict between need and desire becomes a heroic struggle between the billions of "have-nots" dwelling on the edges of existence and the small number of "haves" isolating themselves from suffering in their gated enclaves and jet-set sorties away from misery. But the two—whether they know it or not—are inextricably connected.

With the discussion period in mind I think it might be appropriate to mention some of the issues, conflicts, values, needed behaviors and potential outcomes of our conversations. I'll state them in the form of questions that might be fruitful to discuss during the evening:

1. What is your definition of the term *enough*?
2. What is the difference between need and desire?
3. How has our society made desires into needs?
4. How can we undo this damage?
5. How much would I be willing to give up to provide enough for all?
6. Is it a zero sum game, with someone losing what others gain? Why, or why not?
7. How will moving toward the goal of enough possibly affect the world's richest nations?

8. What new political and economic structures and values might be required to provide enough for all?
9. What religious or philosophical basis can you give for believing that all people should have enough?
10. How can we learn to gain status in ways other than amassing power and possessions?
11. What possible ecological outcomes can you see arising from seeking enough for all?
12. How are the rich and the poor inextricably connected? With what results?
13. Is providing enough for all politically and economically sustainable? Why or why not?

Ruby Payne—*A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, aha! Process, 1996

A working definition of poverty is “the extent to which an individual does without resources.”

These resources are the following:

- **Financial**—having the money to purchase goods and services
- **Emotional**—being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This is an internal resource and shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices.
- **Mental**—having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, computing) to deal with daily life.
- **Spiritual**—believing in divine purpose and guidance
- **Physical**—having physical health and mobility
- **Support Systems**—having friends, family, and backup resources available to access in times of need. These are external resources.
- **Relationships/Role Models**—having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriate, who are nurturing to the **child (or adult), and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior**
- **Knowledge of Hidden Rules**—knowing the unspoken cues and habits of a group

Lynne Twist, *The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2003, p. 48-53

The Toxic Myths of Scarcity

...Scarcity is a lie, but it has been passed down as truth and with a powerful mythology that insists on itself, demands compliance, and discourages doubt or questions...When we unpack the mind-set of scarcity, we find three central myths...

Toxic Myth #1: There's Not Enough

The first prevailing myth of scarcity is *there's not enough*. There's not enough to go around. Everyone can't make it. Somebody's going to be left out. There are way too many people.

There's not enough food. There's not enough water. There's not enough air. There's not enough time. There's not enough money...

In our own communities, we respond to the fear that *there's not enough* by creating systems that favor us or exclude others from access to basic resources such as clean water, good schools, adequate health care, or safe housing. In our own families, *there's not enough* drives us to buy more than we need or even want of some things, to value, favor, or curry favor with people on the basis of their value to us in relation to money, rather than qualities of character.

Toxic Myth #2: More Is Better

...More of anything is better than what we have. It's the logical response if you fear there's not enough, but *more is better* drives a competitive culture of accumulation, acquisition, and greed that only heightens fears and quickens the pace of the race. And none of it makes life more valuable...When we buy into the promise that more is better, we can never arrive...

Toxic Myth #3: That's Just the Way It Is

...There's not enough to go around, more is definitely better, and the people who have more are always people who are other than us. It's not fair, but we'd better play the game because *that's just the way it is* and it's a hopeless, helpless, unequal, unfair world where you can never get out of this trap...

Legislative Report: Commission to End Poverty in Minnesota by 2020, January 2009, p. 32-36
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Recommendation #1: Restore work as a means out of poverty.

The value of work is embedded in Minnesota culture and work is the primary means Minnesotans embrace as a way out of poverty. A larger proportion of working-age Minnesotans are in the workforce than in most other states, and Minnesota women have one of the highest workforce participation rates in the country. If we truly value work, we should ensure that there are adequate incentives to promote work and ongoing training opportunities available so workers remain productive and marketable.

... there is a strong need in Minnesota for a more stable employment environment offering better compensation to workers.

Ensure that work pays:

- Raise the minimum wage. The federal government should pass legislation to increase the minimum wage. In the absence of federal action, Minnesota should increase the state minimum wage.
- Expand and increase state income tax credits to reach more households and better supplement low wages.

Make work available for all Minnesotans:

- Guarantee child care for all low-income families...
- Allow individuals receiving disability benefits to work without penalty...
- Open doors to employment and full participation in community life to Minnesotans who have served their time and met their court-imposed obligations after committing a crime...
- Pass “ban the box” legislation that would prohibit asking about criminal history on the initial employment application...
- Create paid “stepping stone jobs”--...

Help business make employment opportunities available:

- Assist businesses who are trying to upgrade the skill level of their employees...
- Examine how taxes can be structured to incent businesses to hire more people...

Reflecting on Our Traditions:

1. How do I define what is a basic human need? Where does this criteria come from?
2. Do I have a role in helping to ensure that all people can meet their basic human needs? Why or why not? If so, what might that role be?
3. How do I think about my needs versus my wants -- what's the difference? How do I feel about satisfying my wants when there are many who cannot meet their needs?
4. As a group identify (and agree on) a list of 8 basics that everyone needs enough of in life.

Creative Experiences:

Resource Wheel Activity

Materials Needed: Handouts of the three Resource Wheels (one set of three for each participant, see Appendix A), Markers

Goal: The purpose of this activity is to allow each participant to look at their past and present resources and note any changes. Each person can reflect on why they may have made those changes and prioritized certain types of resources over others. Finally, the third wheel will allow each person to commit to future changes if there are any after completing this activity.

Directions: Starting with the “Resources you had growing up” wheel, participants should color in each slice of the pie to the extent they feel they had that resource as a child. For instance, if they had good health during childhood, they may fill in all or most of the “Physical” slice. Conversely, if they or their family did not have a strong support network, they may color in only the tip of the “Support systems” slice.

Participants should repeat this activity to reflect the resources they or their family currently have, and finally the resources they or their family would like to have.

Appendix A

Resources You Had Growing Up

Knowing the un-spoken cues and habits of a group.

Knowledge of Hidden Rules

Financial

Having the money to purchase goods and services

Relationships / Role models

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriately nurturing to the child and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior

Emotional

Being able to choose and control emotional responses without engaging in self-destructive behaviors. Stamina, perseverance and choices.

Support Systems

Having friends, family and back-up resources available to access in times of need.

Mental

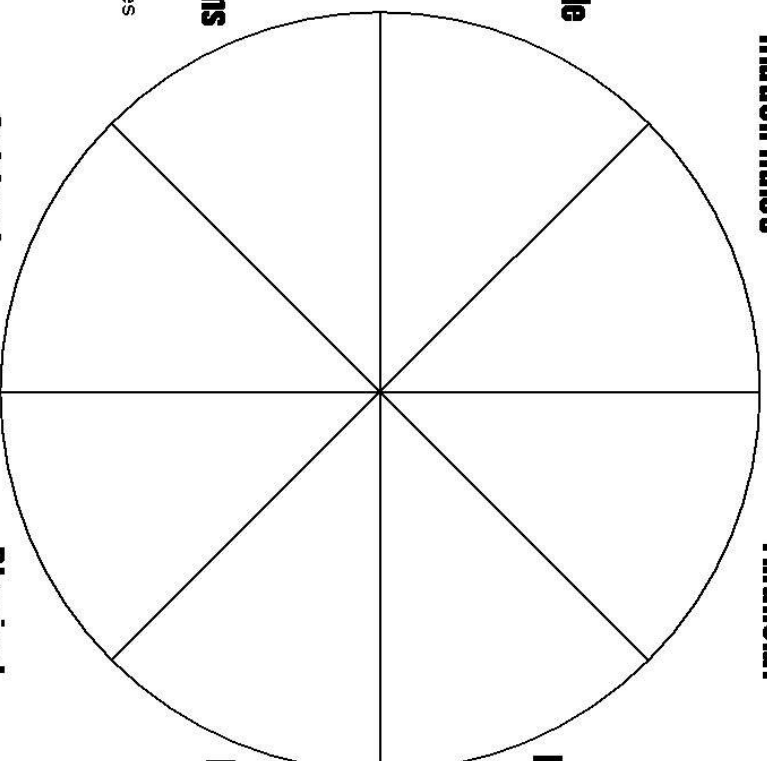
Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, etc.) to deal with daily life.

Spiritual

Believing in divine purpose and guidance

Physical

Having physical health and mobility.



Resources You Have Now

Knowing the un-spoken cues and habits of a group.

Knowledge of Hidden Rules

Financial

Having the money to purchase goods and services

Relationships / Role models

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriately nurturing to the child and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior

Emotional

Being able to choose and control emotional responses without engaging in self-destructive behaviors. Stamina, perseverance and choices.

Support Systems

Having friends, family and back-up resources available to access in times of need.

Mental

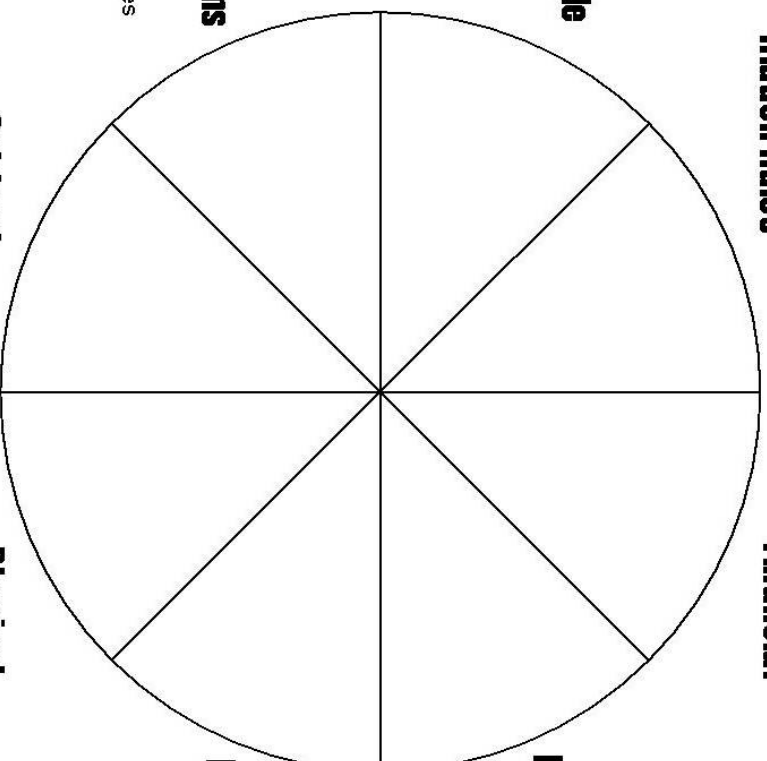
Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, etc.) to deal with daily life.

Spiritual

Believing in divine purpose and guidance

Physical

Having physical health and mobility.



What Changes Would You Like to Make

Knowing the un-spoken cues and habits of a group.

Knowledge of Hidden Rules

Financial

Having the money to purchase goods and services

Relationships / Role models

Having frequent access to adult(s) who are appropriately nurturing to the child and who do not engage in self-destructive behavior

Emotional

Being able to choose and control emotional responses without engaging in self-destructive behaviors. Stamina, perseverance and choices.

Support Systems

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Mental

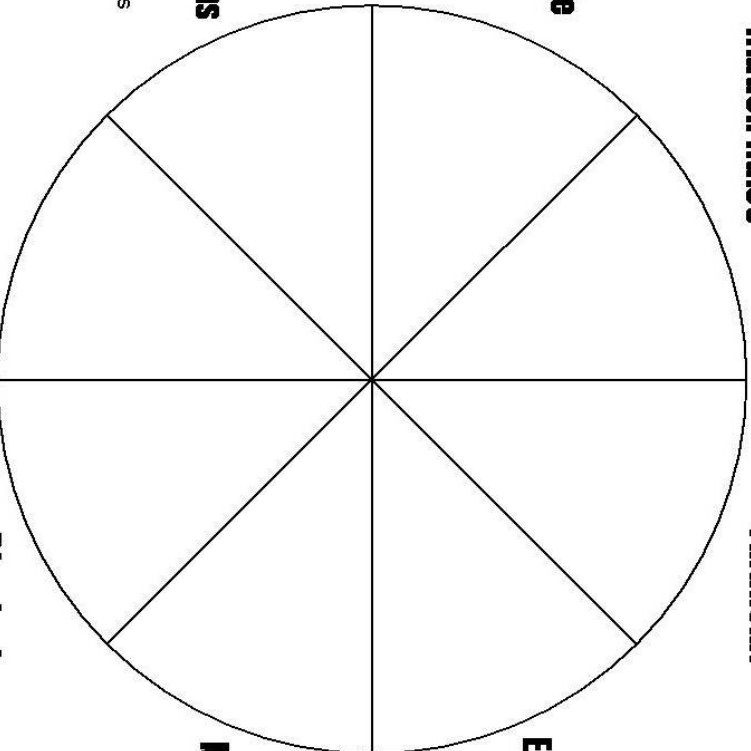
Having the mental abilities and acquired skills (reading, writing, etc.) to deal with daily life.

Spiritual

Believing in divine purpose and guidance

Physical

Having physical health and mobility.



Be the Change:

How will your reflections on “Enough of the Basics of Life” lead you to act? Has the wisdom of other group members during this session adjusted your own thinking? For more information on current legislative action regarding this theme, go to www.mnwithoutpoverty.org or for federal anti-poverty issues www.halfinten.org. There you will also find links to our partner organizations, many of whom are working on initiatives that need your involvement. Be the change!

Extending the Theme:

Film: Brewster’s Millions

Goal: To broaden and deepen the discussion begun in Session 1 about defining needs versus wants.

Directions: Locate a copy of the movie Brewster’s Millions (1985, 97 minutes, rated PG). After watching the movie use the discussion questions provided to encourage group reflection on the concept of enough.

Plot Synopsis:

Monty Brewster is a second-rate minor league baseball pitcher with the (fictional) Hackensack Bulls. He and his best friend Spike Nolan (John Candy), the catcher for the Bulls, are arrested after a bar fight, but cannot afford bail. A stranger (posing as a photographer) offers bail, and asks them to come to New York with him. At a Manhattan law office, Brewster is told that his recently deceased great-uncle Rupert Horn (Hume Cronyn) - whom he's never met - has left him his entire fortune, but with several conditions. Brewster is challenged to either take \$1 million upfront, or spend \$30 million within 30 days to inherit \$300 million. If he chooses the former, the law firm becomes the executor of the estate and divides the money among charities (after taking a sizable fee). In the latter case, after 30 days, he may not own any assets that are not already his, and he must get value for the services of anyone he hires. He may donate only 5% to charity and lose 5% by gambling. Neither may he buy expensive goods and destroy or give them away. And he's not allowed to tell anyone, even Spike. Monty decides to take the \$30 million challenge.

Questions for after the film:

1. What did you think of the movie?
2. How did the movie relate to enough?

3. How do you think you would have reacted if you were one of Monte Brewster's friends?
4. What lesson did Monte's uncle try to teach him? Do you think it would work in real life?
5. When is enough too much?
6. What is the difference between wants and needs? How do we understand what are basic needs? Are basic needs different for different people?
7. How does society influence us to turn our desires into needs? What can we do to change this? Should we change this?
8. What can we learn from this movie about enough? About our needs and wants? About society? About our relationships with others?

Other Ways to Extend the Theme:

YouTube video: Beverly Crawford—"He's Done Enough"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NcskUYE1HrQ>