



## **A Discussion Guide for People of Faith Session 6: Enough for All**

### **THEME:**

When we begin to believe that there is indeed enough for all we can begin to imagine a new way forward and so bring to life a Minnesota (and a world) without poverty. This session sets the stage for that vision and prompts action that will lead to its realization.

*We believe the desire to overcome poverty is not simply a human idea, but is the desire of our Creator, and that the work to create a more just and whole society will be empowered by the Creator's presence.*

**A Common Foundation: Shared Principles for Work on Overcoming Poverty (7<sup>th</sup> principle)**



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## Breaking the Ice:

### *Enough for All Artistic Expression*

**Goal:** To think about how you as an individual imagine what is “enough”.

**Materials:** 4x4 squares of cardstock paper, in a variety of colors, enough for each participant, sharpies or felt-tipped markers

**Directions:** Each participant should choose a colored square and a marker. On one side they should write a word, phrase, or draw a symbol that represents their own experience of “enough”—more than enough, less than enough, just enough, etc.

After they have finished they should pair up with another person and show them their drawing and explain it to the other person.

Time permitting everyone should come back to the group and share the cards.

## Our Traditions Speak:

Ephesians 3:20-21—by the power at work within us; accomplish abundantly more

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Zakat, the third “Pillar” of Islam – Charity due

Zakat is different from voluntary charity; for practicing Muslims it is an obligation as important to fulfill as the five daily prayers. In most cases it is calculated annually as 2.5% of any investable wealth or assets above a certain level that has been in a person’s possession for a year. Who is entitled to Zakat? The Qur’an [in 9:60] specifically mentions “the poor,” the needy,” “those in debt,” and the “wayfarer,” among others.

In the distribution of Zakat--the obligatory annual charity that an Islamic State would collect--there are two schools of thought among scholars:

1. Some say that a needy person should be given "enough" for a whole year (so it is not like a band-aid that covers the immediate needs and then the person is in need shortly after that).
2. Others say that a needy person should be given "enough" for a lifetime (by empowering him or her to sustain themselves; for example, giving them enough to buy a sewing machine and initial related supplies and inventory, as well as establish themselves in business).

Isaiah 55:1-13—Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters

Ho, everyone who thirsts,  
come to the waters;  
and you that have no money,  
come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.  
Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?  
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.  
Incline your ear, and come to me;  
listen, so that you may live.  
I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.  
See, I made him a witness to the peoples,

a leader and commander for the peoples.  
See, you shall call nations that you do not know,  
and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

Seek the LORD while he may be found,  
call upon him while he is near;  
let the wicked forsake their way,  
and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the LORD, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.  
For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD.  
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,  
so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

For you shall go out in joy,  
and be led back in peace;  
the mountains and the hills before you  
shall burst into song,  
and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.  
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress;  
instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle;  
and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial,  
for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Revelation 21:1-7—A new heaven and a new earth; he will wipe every tear from their eyes

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice

from the throne saying,  
'See, the home of God is among mortals.  
He will dwell with them;  
they will be his peoples,  
and God himself will be with them;  
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.  
Death will be no more;  
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,  
for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God and they will be my children.'

### The Qur'an 2:177 – Giving is part of righteousness

"Righteousness is not that you turn your faces towards the East or the West; rather, true righteousness is for those who believe in GOD, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book, the Prophets; who give of their wealth—though they cherish it—to relatives, orphans, the needy, the wayfarer, those who ask, and to free captives; who establish regular prayer and pay alms; who fulfill their promises whenever they promise; and who patiently endure in poverty and hardship and during battle...."

### Isaiah 35—The Return of the Redeemed

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
'Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God.  
He will come with vengeance,

with terrible recompense.  
He will come and save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;  
then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

## A complete Islamic program for dealing with poverty

Work

The Sponsorship of well-to-do relatives

Zakat

The Sponsorship of the State's funding resources

Voluntary Charity

## Wisdom in Our World:

A Common Foundation: Shared Principles for Work on Overcoming Poverty (7<sup>th</sup> principle)

We believe the desire to overcome poverty is not simply a human idea, but is the desire of our Creator, and that the work to create a more just and whole society will be empowered by the Creator's presence.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love*, Fortress Press, 1963, p. 70

In a real sense, all life is interrelated. All people are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the interrelated structure of reality.

Lui, Robles, Leondar-Wright, Brewer, Adamson—*The Color of Wealth: The Story of the U.S. Racial Wealth Divide*, New York: The New Press, 2006, p. 276-277, 290-291.

Jobs are needed that provide the cash income to cover day-to-day needs, *with something left over to build savings*, the basis for financial wealth. Today, income disparity lays the groundwork for future wealth disparities...Once basic living expenses are met, each additional dollar of annual income generates \$3.26 in net worth over a person's lifetime. Wealth disparity grows because of differences in income...Income includes not just wages and salaries based on working, but cash supports for those who are unemployed, retired, or parents of small children. (p. 276-77)

The first step in building a movement for greater economic and racial equality is a change in consciousness. The myths of racial superiority and inferiority can be debunked, and the government's hand in creating racial categories and distributing economic resources by race exposed. We see that "the rich get richer and the poor poorer" is not a law of nature, but a man-made choice. We remember what brings us together as Americans is our shared value that work should be rewarded, and our belief that leaders are not born but rise from the ranks when given the opportunity...

At the end of his life, Martin Luther King, Jr., made this prophetic statement: "There is nothing new about poverty. What is new is that now we have the techniques and the resources to get rid of poverty. The real question is whether we have the will." As the twenty-

first century ticks along, we can stiffen our will. We can end poverty, and we can close the racial economic divide. (p. 290-291)

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett—*The Spirit Level: Why Greater Equality Makes Societies Stronger*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009, pages 177, 291.

...Greater equality can be gained either by using taxes and benefits to redistribute very unequal incomes or by greater equality in gross incomes before taxes and benefits, which leaves less need for redistribution. So big government may not always be necessary to gain the advantages of a more equal society...The really important implication is that how a society becomes more equal is less important than whether or not it actually does so. (p. 177)

The relationships between inequality and the prevalence of health and social problems shown in earlier chapters suggest that if the United States was to reduce its income inequality to something like the average of the four most equal of the rich countries (Japan, Norway, Sweden and Finland), the proportion of the population feeling they could trust others might rise by 75 per cent—presumably with matching improvements in the quality of community life; rates of mental illness and obesity might similarly each be cut by almost two-thirds, teenage birth rates could be more than halved, prison populations might be reduced by 75 per cent, and people could live longer while working the equivalent of two months less per year. (p. 261)

Robert B. Reich—*After-Shock: The Next Economy and America's Future*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010, page 146.

None of us can thrive in a nation divided between a small number of people receiving an ever larger share of the nation's income and wealth, and everyone else receiving a declining share. The lopsidedness not only diminishes economic growth but also tears at the fabric of our society. America cannot succeed if the basic bargain at the heart of our economy remains broken. The most fortunate among us who have reached the pinnacles of power and success depend on a stable economic and political system. That stability rests on the public's trust that the system operates in the interest of us all. Any loss of such trust threatens the well-being of everyone. We will choose reform, I believe, because we are a sensible nation, and reform is the only sensible option we have.

Lynne Twist, *The Soul of Money: Transforming Your Relationship with Money and Life*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, 2003, p. 59-60.

... (Buckminster Fuller) said that for centuries, perhaps thousands of years, we have lived in the belief that there's not enough to go around, and that we need to fight and compete to garner those resources for ourselves. Perhaps it had been a valid perception at one time, or perhaps it hadn't been, he said, but at this point in history—in the 1970s—we were able to do so much more with so much less that as a human family we clearly had reached a point where there

actually was enough for everyone everywhere to meet or even surpass their needs to live a reasonable healthy, productive life. This moment represented a dramatic breakthrough in the evolution of civilization and humankind, he said...it could be the most significant turning point in our evolution because it meant we could move from a *you-or-me* world—a world where either you or I make it, and where we need to compete and fight to see who wins—to a *you-and-me* world, where all of us can make it. In that *you-and-me* world, all of us have enough food, enough water, enough land, enough housing, enough of the fundamental things for each one of us to live a fulfilling and productive life.

This new threshold completely changes the game, and it would take fifty years, he predicted, for us to make the necessary adjustments in our world so we could move from a *you-or-me* paradigm to *you-and-me* paradigm, a paradigm that says the world can work for everyone with no one and nothing left out.

Legislative Report: Commission to End Poverty, January 2009, p. 56.

**Ending poverty:** Throughout the report, we talk about the concept of ending or eliminating poverty, but we want to add two points of clarification. First, in ending poverty, we do not pretend that nobody will ever fall into poverty—a family whose housing burns down with all of their possessions may suddenly be homeless and in poverty, as may a person who has no income because they lost their job suddenly, or someone who had to flee violence in their home. There will always be crises that lead to temporary poverty. The Commission's goal is to make sure that people in crisis get prompt help in getting their feet back on the ground quickly.

Likewise, in our goal of eliminating poverty, we are not including people who traditionally would qualify as being in poverty, but whose income and assets are a matter of lifestyle choice, such as an individual who wants to live off of the land, or a religious person who has taken an oath of poverty.

## Reflecting on Our Traditions:

1. Do you believe that we can create, as Buckminster Fuller mentions in the Twist text above, a *you-and-me* society rather than a *you-or-me* society? What needs to happen in Minnesota to realize this change?
2. Martin Luther King, Jr. is quoted above as believing that we have the means to end poverty if we can find the will. Do you agree? Why or why not? What do you think finding the will means in concrete terms?

## Creative Experiences:

### Let's Talk About Enough

**Materials:** This exercise continues the process begun in the Breaking the Ice Activity, using the same squares

**Directions:** In the Breaking the Ice Activity, participants drew a word, phrase, or symbol to depict their own experience with “Enough.” They shared their story with one another.

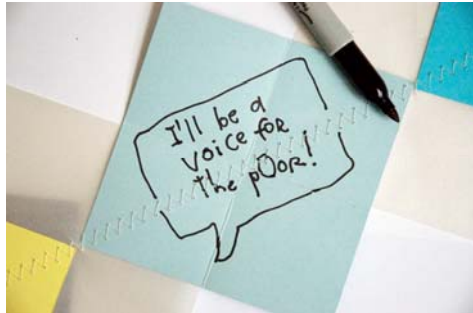
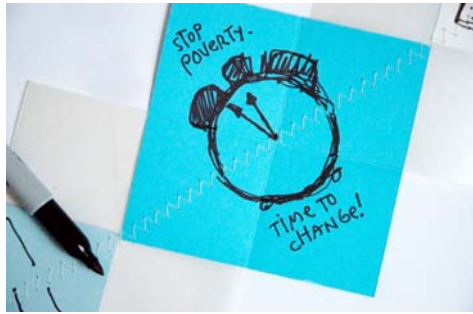
Now, invite each participant to turn their square over. This time draw a word, picture, symbol, or phrase that depicts your commitment and what you will do to ensure there is “Enough for All.”

Discuss your commitment to “enough for all” with others in your group.

Next, take another square—one for the whole group. Discuss together what your group will do to work toward “Enough for All.” After discussion draw a symbol, word, phrase, picture to represent your Group commitment. Label this one: “Group Commitment”.

Gather all of the squares and either display them in your local setting, or send/deliver them to A Minnesota Without Poverty. If you send them to A Minnesota Without Poverty (2423 Park Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55404), they will be sewn together into streamers. Later, the streamers will be brought together and displayed in a variety of places to show our commitment to work toward A Minnesota Without Poverty, where there is enough for all.

## Appendix A



## Be the Change:

The Legislative Commission to End Poverty created benchmarks to guide us in the task of ending poverty in Minnesota by 2020. Go to [www.mnwithoutpoverty.org](http://www.mnwithoutpoverty.org) to view the background materials and learn more about specifics. Commit to joining the work by contacting the organization to offer your time, talent or treasure. Be the change!

## Extending the Theme:

### *A Minnesota Without Poverty Presentation*

**Goal:** Now that you have finished this curriculum, what do you do next? Invite A Minnesota Without Poverty ([www.mnwithoutpoverty.org](http://www.mnwithoutpoverty.org)) to come and give a presentation to your group. You will hear about exciting progress being made to end poverty in Minnesota by 2020 and learn about other programs and activities in which your group or individuals from your group can be involved.

Remember, only with your help will we ensure that there is truly “Enough for All.”

Time of presentation: Presentations can be tailored to your schedule and timeframe.