



LOCAL HUNGER

SECONDARY LEVEL

Hunger Banquet Activity

- **Purpose:** the purpose of this activity is to provide students with a unique and memorable experience that will allow them to learn about the impact and prevalence of hunger in their community.
- **Instructional method(s):** class discussion
- **Differentiated Instruction:**
 - Empower the students by encouraging them to host a hunger banquet for the school.
- **Estimated time:** 1 hour
- **Steps:**
 1. Choose a lunch hour to host the hunger banquet.
 2. Either ask students to bring their own lunch, or arrange with the cafeteria staff to have lunch provided.
 3. The most important part of the banquet is the way the guests are arranged and what they are required to do throughout the course of the banquet. This will be done based on local food bank statistics. The class will be divided in half, one half will represent those in Canada who do not rely on a food bank, while the other half will represent those that do. Within the second group, they will be divided up to reveal the different types of people that access a food bank, based on statistics from Food Bank Canada. This will provide the students with greater insight into food bank use and the prevalence of hunger in their community.
 4. Arrange the guests as follows:
 - Divide the class in half.
 - One half will represent the population in Canada that does not rely on a food bank (do not reveal this until the end of the banquet). This group will be given no restrictions throughout the banquet and they will be treated with extra care.
 - The other half will represent the group of Canadian that relies on food banks (do not reveal this until the end of the banquet). Within this group, divide them as follows:
 - 11.4% cannot use their hands (after the meal, reveal that this group is percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that is working poor).
 - 38% can't speak (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are children and youth).
 - 15% must wear a blindfold over their eyes (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that have disabilities).
 - 7.2% can only eat their food using a spoon (after the meal, reveal that this group is percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are senior citizens).
 - The remaining guests can only eat with their left hand (after the meal, reveal that this group is the percentage of people accessing a food bank in Canada that are single persons).
 5. Allow the banquet to begin! Monitor the guests while they eat to ensure they are abiding by their restrictions.

6. When students have finished eating, ask the different groups how they felt during the course of their meal. Ensure that you get a reaction from each group.
7. After this reflection, reveal to the group what the different restrictions symbolized. Encourage student reactions by asking the following questions:
 - Before this banquet, what types of people did you think accessed a food bank?
 - Were you surprised by any of the Food Bank Canada statistics? What surprised you?
8. Explain that in March 2010, 867,948 people in Canada accessed a Food Bank. This is the highest amount of people on record, indicating the need is increasing.
9. Read the following list to reveal current struggles faced by Canadian food banks and some of the ways they are coping with these struggles:
 - 27% of food banks lack adequate funding.
 - 31% of food banks do not have enough food to meet the needs.
 - 50% of food banks have been forced to give out less food than usual.
 - 57% bought more food than usual to meet the need.
 - Nearly half of food banks in Canada have no paid staff.
 - 15% report difficulty recruiting enough volunteers to manage everyday operations
10. At this time promote a discussion around what students can do individually and as a class to fight to the local hunger problem and contribute to food banks in their community.

These statistics were taken from Food Banks Canada, Hunger Count 2010
<http://www.cafb-acba.ca/main2.cfm?id=10718648-B6A7-8AA0-6A3C6F3CAC0124E1>

Encourage students to take action to end local hunger. Participate in Free The Children's Halloween for Hunger campaign. Learn more at www.weday.com/takeaction.