

CREATION,

FOOD AND SUSTAINABILITY

A biblical-theological guide to food justice



Liliane Alcântara



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A biblical-theological guide to food justice

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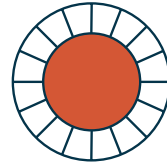
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"Food is a gift of God given to all creatures for the purposes of life's nurture, sharing, and celebration. When it is done in the name of God, eating is the earthly realization of God's eternal communion-building love."



— NORMAN WIRZBA

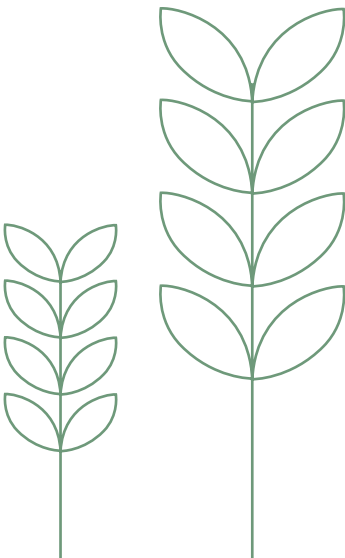




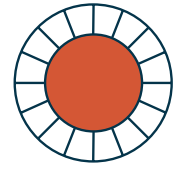
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I. INTRODUCTION: WHY TALK ABOUT FOOD JUSTICE AND SUSTAINABILITY?



Have you ever stopped to think about the impact your diet has on God's creation and on the lives of others? In 2023, approximately 733 million people were hungry, representing about 1 in 11 people in the world, while one third of all food produced was wasted (SOFI, 2024). According to the Christian faith, how should we respond to this reality?

Our way of managing the earth's resources reflects our relationship with God and our fellow man. Food is mentioned in the Bible countless times; it is an important element that permeates man's relationship with the Creator and the relationship between humanity and nature. From the Garden of Eden to the Lord's Supper, God teaches us that food is not only a physical necessity, but also an expression of His provision, justice and generosity.

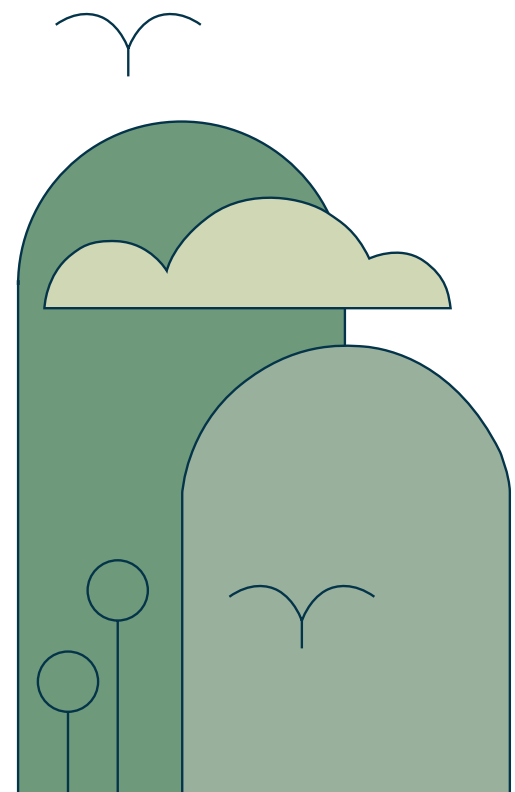
This guide was created to help you reflect on food justice and sustainability from a theological perspective. Reflections, inductive biblical studies, and practices were combined so

that Christian college students and Christian leaders will be ready to actively participate in building more just and sustainable food systems.

The central question guiding us is: What can we do as individuals and communities of faith to ensure that everyone has access to just and sustainable food?

The world is marked by major inequalities that increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in terms of access to food and the consequences of rampant environmental degradation. Millions of people are facing hunger and food insecurity, while unsustainable agricultural practices compromise natural resources for future generations. In this scenario, food justice and sustainability emerge as central issues not only for public policy and economics, but also for Christian faith, which calls us to care for creation and ensure that all have what they need to live in dignity.

As individuals and communi-



ties of faith, we are invited to look for decisions and actions that can promote a more just and sustainable food system.

The Bible teaches us that God created a fruitful world, a life-giving system, and gave us the responsibility to steward it with wisdom and justice. This guide seeks to provide theological and practical reflections to help Christians embrace this invitation through concrete actions that express love of neighbor and faithfulness to God's call to care for creation. Our challenge is to transform this reality through conscious choices committed to justice.

How is this guide structured?

The guide is composed of three main sections: reflections, theological practices and inductive Bible studies. The first section consists of six passages that lead us to reflect on how the Christian faith invites us to care for the earth and ensure that everyone has access to food. The second section presents initiatives and practices, that is, concrete strategies and actions that students, professionals and religious communities can implement to respond to the topic addressed. And finally, the third section presents a series of inductive Bible studies where we dive into the Bible to soak in and understand God's call to food justice.

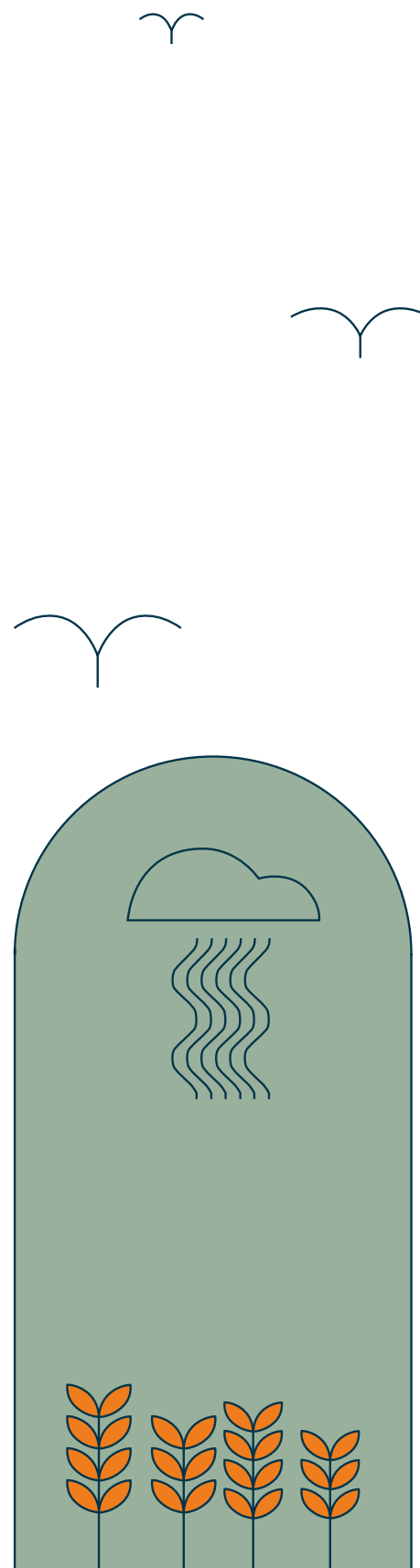
Why is this guide relevant to Christian students and church leaders?

Theological reflections offer an understanding of food justice and sustainability from a biblical perspective, connecting issues such as stewardship of creation, equity and care for the vulnerable. They also help form a Christian worldview that recognizes food and the environment as parts of God's redemptive purpose, as well as analyze biblical texts that show how faith relates to food and care for the earth.

Each theme is accompanied by detailed initiatives and practices, from planning to implementation, thus providing food justice and sustainability actions, such as community composting, responsible consumption, support for small producers and reduction of food waste. The guide also encourages participation in public policies and social projects that promote food security and care for the environment.

Inductive Bible studies encourage a participatory approach where readers discover for themselves what Scripture says about justice and sustainability, put biblical principles into practice in university and church contexts, and engage in rich discussions in small groups or in discipleship settings.

In this sense, this guide prepares students and leaders to



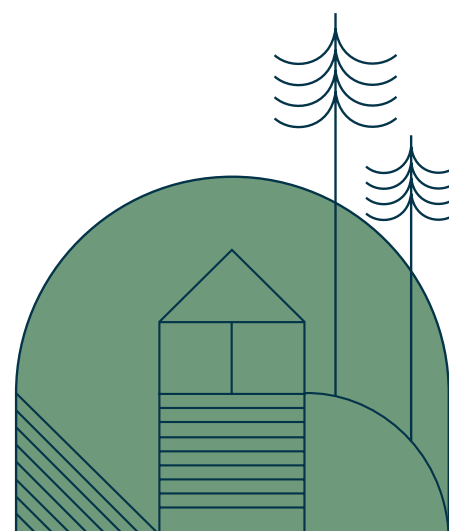
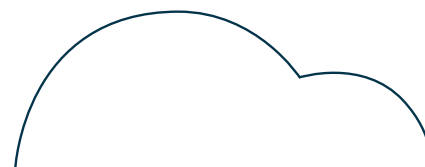
be agents of change in their communities, offering guidance on the different ways in which we can involve Christian groups in the university, neighborhoods, churches, etc., how to promote more just and sustainable food practices... In addition, it reinforces the commitment of the Christian community to social and environmental responsibility, aligning faith with the Christian's daily life. This material, therefore, can be a source of inspiration and empowerment for Christians to live their faith in a relevant and transformative way, promoting food justice and sustainability in their contexts.

How to get more out of this guide?

This will depend on the context and objectives of the group. Initially, theological reflections can help Christian university students and church leaders understand the relationship between faith, food justice and sustainability. This stage can be done individually, as a process of personal deepening, or in groups, through guided readings and conversations, so that participants will have a solid foundation before moving on to more practical studies.

This guide can also be followed in study groups, since it promotes the application of inductive biblical studies in a collective setting. These meetings can follow a structured format, in which participants analyze the proposed biblical passages, share ideas and look for connections between the biblical text and the needs of the current context. After this theoretical stage, the guide can also be a tool for implementing initiatives such as community gardens, composting, awareness campaigns on food waste or support for small producers. In this way, a complete learning experience is achieved, combining reflection, study and transformative action in the community.

In the following chapters, we will explore these questions and the means available to live our faith together and align it with God's call for us to be just and to care for creation. ***Shall we begin?***



II. REFLECTIONS

1. BETWEEN THE GARDEN AND THE FALL: Restoring Our Relationship with Creation

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

—Genesis 1:26

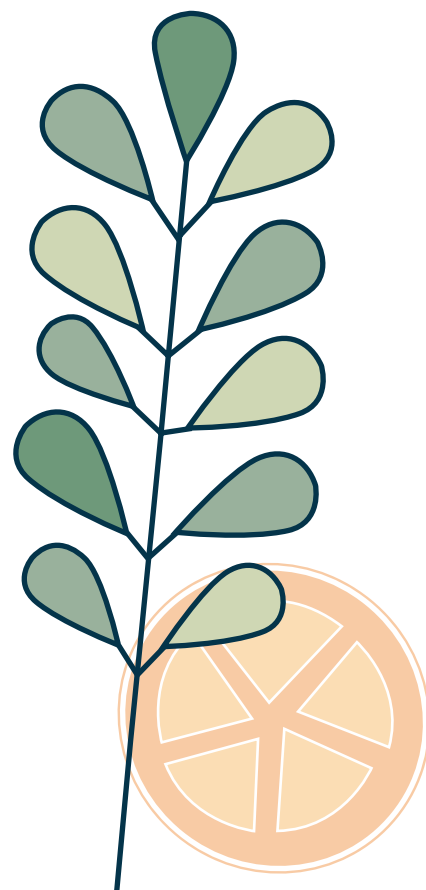
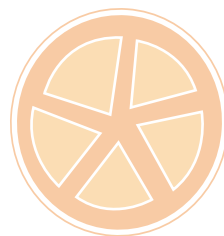
On the sixth day of creation, after shaping the earth, creating light, separating the waters from the dry land, creating the stars, all the diversity of flora and fauna, God takes the final step and creates something like himself, giving mankind the authority to rule the garden. In the first 26 verses of Genesis, God plans and executes the creation of the cosmos, thus establishing a safe, harmonious environment conducive to life.

It is fascinating to note that God devotes so much time, attention and care to the creation of a sustainable and life-sustaining space, and it is only at the end of the chapter that we see the creation of mankind. In church I always heard that man was God's most important creation. With this statement, I am not trying to organize a ranking of importance in the divine creation. This expression, however, has always been used in my context as a way not only to highlight the importance of

man, but also to diminish the other works of the Creator. Phrases such as "Man is the crown of creation" were often used to condone the belittling of nature and even its exploitation.

By acting in this way, we distort the image of God. In Genesis 1, the expression "God saw that it was good" appears six times. He appreciated everything he did. God's created system is internally complementary, based on the interdependence of biotic and abiotic components, and He saw that this was good. God was pleased to create mankind as part of this system, to manage it and depend on it.

The Hebrew term "radah", translated as dominate/rule, implies responsibility and care. As humanity was created in the image of God, our dominion should reflect the Creator's relationship with His creation, as well as His attributes: justice, compassion and faithfulness. When this is not



the case, we distort His image. In the context of food, this relationship between humanity and the rest of the created world must achieve a fine balance, since we must ensure equal access to food for all, and thus the dignity and life of every human being.

It is true that, with the entrance of sin into the world, the image of God in humanity was distorted, which profoundly affected the relationship between humanity and creation. We developed a discordant relationship with God, with our neighbor and with the earth. The garden, the provider of life, became a place of suffering, difficulty and imbalance. However, the mandate to cultivate and care for creation still applies to us, even in the present context of a fallen world, marked by our sinful nature that tends to abuse, exploit and propagate injustice.

According to the annual report of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), 1.05 billion tons of food waste were discarded globally in 2022. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) reports that 33% of the planet's soil is mo-

derately to highly degraded, and more than 90% could be degraded by 2050.

These figures exemplify how sin transforms human dominance into injustice and environmental degradation. Although we live in a fallen world, that is not the whole story. We too have been redeemed. Therefore, we must govern from the perspective of redemption, through a renewed understanding of our vocation. The cultural mandate contained in Genesis 1:26 was not nullified by the fall; it remains in effect. What was once transgressed under the influence of sin, we must now achieve as agents of Christ's redemption, with the marks of reconciliation. Our work is to restore creation, promote environmental stewardship and food justice.

Redemption in Christ invites us to resist the destructive impulses of sin and to seek justice, peace and joy in the preservation of creation, fulfilling our calling. In the context of food, when we become aware of this reality, we adopt practices in our stewardship of creation that reflect God's just and caring character.



**What food choices
can I make to reflect
God's care for
creation?**



Take a moment to
reflect and answer
this question.

2. IMAGO DEI AND FOOD JUSTICE: gender equality in creation and women's role in redemption

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

—Genesis 1:27

This verse from Genesis is one of the fundamental bases for the theological understanding of the imago Dei. The imago Dei is a theological concept that affirms that human beings reflect certain aspects of God's character and nature. Creation in the image of God gives each person intrinsic and equal dignity before God, implying that every human being has value and deserves respect and care. Men and women equally conform this divine image, and it is essential to emphasize that the image of God is fully represented, exclusively, in the figure of both.

In many contexts, the image of man prevails as the full representation of God, while woman is often marginalized or diminished. This misperception directly interferes with the fulfillment of humanity's God-given cultural mandate. But how does this affect food issues?

In verse 27 of the Genesis 1 account, we see God creating humanity. Men and women, created equally in God's image, are called to represent him on earth. In Genesis 1:28, the cultural mandate to dominate and care for creation is directly related to the imago Dei; therefore, this

mandate was given equally to both, implying a call for responsible and just stewardship. Humanity must reflect God's just and caring authority over the world, governing creation in such a way as to foster its prosperity and harmony.

As the world became contaminated by sin, human relationships became corrupted, giving rise to behaviors that conflict with God's character, such as injustice, inequality and indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources. The world after the fall is marked by imbalance in all relationships, which is also manifested in gender issues, where women have been marginalized and deprived of land, resources or support to contribute significantly to bioconservation and food production.

According to data from the State of the World's Food Security Report - SOFI (2022), women are 1.3% more likely to be food insecure than men. In 2021, 31.9% of women worldwide faced moderate or severe food insecurity, compared to 27.6% of men. Inequality is most evident in Latin America and the Caribbean, where the gap between men and women was 11.3 percentage points in



2021, compared to 9.4 points in 2020. UN data (2022) reveal that, on average, women represent more than 40% of the agricultural workforce in developing countries, and in some parts of Africa and Asia this number can exceed 50%. However, the number of women landowners does not exceed 20%. Moreover, the role of women in subsistence agriculture is often unpaid and their contribution to the rural economy is largely undervalued.

These are just a few facts that reveal how women have been exposed to various forms of exploitation, oppression and environmental, food and social injustices. This represents a violation of the divine dignity conferred upon them at creation. In the reality of the fallen world, where sin distorts relationships, the role of women in food production and distribution is often neglected, without taking into account the intrinsic value they have as bearers of the imago Dei.

Sin corrupts not only the relationship between human beings and God, but also distorts interpersonal relationships and relationships with creation. The structural inequality that marginalizes women in the food sector represents a violation of divine justice. In Isaiah 1:17, the Lord says: "Learn to do good, seek justice, rebuke the oppressor, defend the fatherless, plead for the widow." This call for justice also applies to women, who have often been deprived of their rights.

Redemptive theology teaches us that, through Christ, humanity's relationship with God is restored and distortions in human relationships are removed. The dignity of all people, regardless of gender, is restored, and women regain their full role as equal beings in creation. This is crucial in the context of food justice, as women, who have been historically marginalized, have been deprived of basic rights such as access to land, resources for food production and equitable access to diverse and healthy food.

The redemption in Christ also restores the role of women in the cultural mandate given by God in Genesis 1:28. Although sin has disfigured the exercise of this mandate, Christ redeems this vocation, allowing women to play a central role in the management of creation, making the world just, harmonious and life-giving again.

From this perspective, women are not seen as subordinates, but as co-creators and leaders in their communities. They can regain their dignity and authority to participate fully in decision-making processes related to food production, distribution and consumption. This egalitarian vision is fundamental to food justice. By being empowered and enabled to access food resources and land, women more fully reflect the imago Dei, collaborating with God in bringing life and justice to creation.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How does the restoration of the imago Dei in Christ challenge social and economic structures that marginalize women, especially in the context of food justice, and how can the Church act to promote equity and inclusion in the stewardship of creation's resources?



Take a moment to reflect and answer this question.

3. GOD'S PROVIDENCE AND CARE FOR OTHERS

This is what the Lord has commanded: "Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent." The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed.

—Exodus 16:16-18

This passage demonstrates God's providential care for the people of Israel. Let me give you a little more context. Exodus chapter 16 describes the turning point of the people of Israel in their crossing of the wilderness of Sin, on the fifteenth day of the second month after leaving Egypt. The Israelites found themselves in a hostile and barren environment, they were hungry, so they began to complain. God listened to them and provided the necessary food.

Now that we understand better the situation faced by the Israelites, let us look at the instructions given by God in this context and how they reflect His care for the feeding of His people. An interesting point to consider is God's direct dealings with each one, with each family, so that they receive the exact and necessary amount of food. There is a divine intention in ensuring fairness and equity in the acquisition of the manna. God's instructions on the amount that could be retrieved dai-

ly demonstrate the need to respect limits, both natural and social. By prohibiting the hoarding of food, for example, God established a model in which each person's food security depends on both divine provision and the observance of fair distribution.

There was no food left over for those who collected more, and no food lacking for those who collected less. Each family gathered exactly the amount they needed. This is a fundamental aspect of the chapter: although the manna was gathered according to the capacity and need of each family, no one had more than he needed, and no one was in need. This principle reflects an ideal of fair distribution of resources, where excess and scarcity are avoided, promoting food equity. Divine provision, therefore, is linked to a sense of justice, where each person should receive enough for himself and his family, without greed or exploitation.

Another principle expressed



in this chapter of Exodus is that God places limits on the gathering of manna: the people were to gather only enough for each day; those who tried to get more than they needed for the next day found that their manna had spoiled (v. 20). Only on the sixth day were they to gather enough for two days, because of the Sabbath rest (vv. 22-26).

This guide focuses on sustainability and the responsible use of resources. In the context of food justice, this can be interpreted as a call to avoid unnecessary accumulation and overexploitation of land and its resources. A just food system should respect natural limits and promote sustainable practices in food production, distribution and consumption.

It should be noted that the provision of manna required communal obedience to God's instructions, such as gathering as needed and resting on the Sabbath. The community of Israel had to learn to rely on God's daily provision and also to respect the limits of how much and when they could gather.

This points to a communal vision of food justice, where we are all called participate in a network of mutual accountability. Just as the people of Israel were called to work together and share resources fairly, we too are called to collaborate in creating food systems that are inclusive and just, meeting the needs of all.

This principle is aligned with caring for others, a concept widely reiterated in the Law of Moses. In the following chapters of the book of Exodus, we find instructions that reflect this communal responsibility, such as the commandment not to oppress strangers, widows and orphans, and to leave part of the harvest for the poor. This description is far from our reality, with 2.8 billion people lacking access to healthy food, according to the UN (2022). Considering our current context of great inequality, this biblical narrative invites us to seek new food practices that respect the dignity of all people, promote equity and align with the principles of God's care for creation. Food justice is not only a social or political issue, but also an expression of faith, requiring ethical commitment and concrete action.

Thus, the Exodus 16 narrative offers us profound insights into divine provision and care for others, both of which are fundamental to food justice. Trust in God as provider, care for the community, and respect for the limitations imposed by Him provide a model for today's quest for food equity.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can we apply the principle of community responsibility to the fight against hunger and food inequality in our communities?



Take a moment to reflect and answer this question.

4. SIN, INJUSTICE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

—Genesis 3:6-7

In Genesis chapter 3, we see the account of the fall of mankind and its consequences. The first human transgression was, in essence, a dietary transgression. The decision to eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil broke the harmony that God had established between humanity and all of creation. Previously, humans worked in cooperation with God to care for the Earth. Cultivation and conservation were actions of justice, loyalty and goodness. However, after the fall, that relationship became marked by contempt for and exploitation of nature.

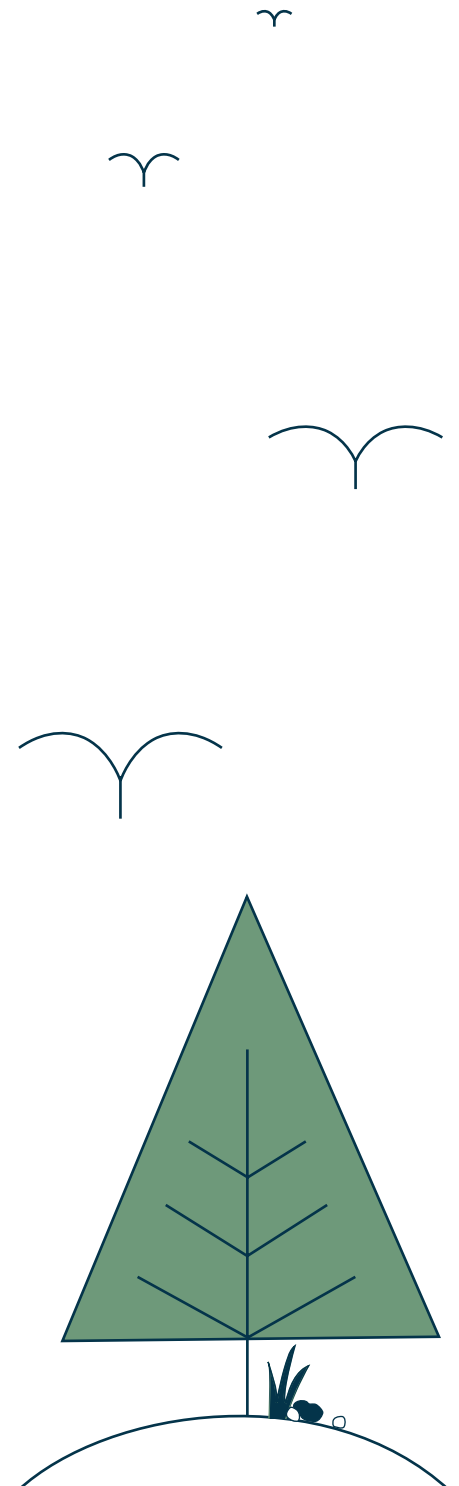
In verses 17 and 18 we see that a curse falls upon the land because of human sin. This initial breakdown negatively impacts and complicates the food supply; the soil will now produce thorns and weeds. The once completely harmonious garden became an environment that demands arduous labor and the land lost its ability to self-sustain life in an abundant and righteous manner.

This primeval imbalance can be seen as the origin of social

injustice and inequality in access to food, as human selfishness and greed have manifested themselves in systems of oppression that deprive a large part of the population of essential resources such as food.

Environmental degradation, a direct consequence of sin, is an additional cause of food injustice that manifests itself in disrespect for the limits that God established for the use of the earth. This distorted view of creation no longer perceives nature as a good to be cared for, but as a resource to be exploited indiscriminately. This is reflected in unsustainable agricultural practices, climate change and the destruction of ecosystems. The most vulnerable populations - especially the poor, women and children - are the most affected, as their livelihoods are directly linked to the land.

In Genesis 2:15, the Creator placed man in the Garden of Eden to work it and care for it. Environmental degradation represents a breach of this mandate. The direct consequence of this is unjust stewardship,



reflected in growing food insecurity. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2023), about 2.5 million people in Brazil face severe food insecurity.

This is a country-specific figure. There are many other reports that point to an alarming global food and poverty scenario. Although the numbers in the graphs may not capture everyone's attention, this reality is still palpable all around us. It is embodied in the lives of the people around us; it is a reality that cannot be ignored.

I have no difficulty in affirming that food injustice is a concrete expression of social injustice. In the Scriptures, the prophets constantly denounced injustice as the primary source of hunger, poverty and deprivation of the most vulnerable. Isaiah 58:6-7 says:

"Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:

to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?"

The call of the Old Testament prophets' discourse for people to acknowledge their sin and repent, to seek to live in a more just way and to praise God as He requires, still resonates today and should unsettle and impel us to dismantle the structural injustice that denies equal access to food. These structures are a reflection of the sin that dehumanizes and marginalizes the poorest.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can a biblical understanding of the relationship between sin, environmental degradation and food injustice lead us to adopt more just and sustainable practices in caring for creation and promoting equity in access to food?



Take a moment to reflect and answer this question.

5. REDEMPTION AND THE CALL TO RESTORATION

But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

—Leviticus 25:4-7

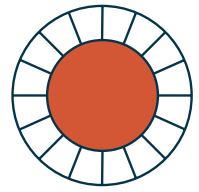
Chapter 25 of Leviticus is fundamental for discussing the concepts of social, environmental and economic justice in Israelite society, as it introduces two important practices: the Sabbatical year and the Jubilee year. Both are intended to promote equity and restoration, both in the interpersonal and environmental frameworks. In the sabbatical year, every seven years, the land was to rest and neither sowing nor reaping was allowed. What grew spontaneously was destined for the consumption of the poor, slaves and foreigners.

This practice reflects an ecological principle, recognizing the need for the earth to rest and renew itself, avoiding its continued exploitation. It also has a theological foundation, emphasizing God's sovereignty over creation: "for the land is Mine" (v. 23), and human beings are its stewards. Forced rest is a reminder that food production does not de-

pend solely on human effort, but on divine blessing.

The principle of the rest of the earth (v. 4-5) suggests a concern for creation and for agricultural sustainability, two elements directly related to food justice. This justice includes practices that respect natural cycles, preserve creation and promote sustainability. From the perspective of redemptive theology, this chapter reflects the restoration of the harmonious relationship between humanity and the earth, which had been tainted by sin.

The jubilee year was celebrated every forty-nine years, after seven cycles of seven years. In this year property was restored and slaves were freed. This commandment stated, "In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property." (v. 13). "If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. They are to be treated as hired workers



or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. (v. 39-41).

Let us not forget that, unlike us, the Israelites did not have a wide variety of supermarket chains where they could obtain food. Land was the main source of livelihood and economic and food security. In this context, this principle guaranteed that land was returned to its original owners, ensuring that families did not lose access to the means of food production for good. Food justice, from this perspective, implies ensuring that all people have equitable access to land and the necessary food production resources.

The liberation of the slaves, in turn, recalled the liberation God provided for the people upon their departure from Egypt, reinforcing Israel's identity as a free people, where human slavery was not to persist. This principle of redemption suggests that food justice is intrinsically linked to overcoming structural inequalities that oppress the poor and marginalized, since hunger and food insecurity often result from poverty.

Another important aspect is the promotion of a just redistribution of resources, remembering that God is the owner of the earth. Wealth and posses-

sions should not be amassed indefinitely in the hands of a few. Food justice requires the equitable distribution of food resources and land, ensuring that no one is deprived of necessary sustenance.

Data from the Map of Inequality in Land Distribution, prepared by UNICAMP, UFPA, UFMG, IPAM, Kadaster, UNEP and SEI (2020), show that the Gini index of land distribution in Brazil is 0.73, which places the country among the most unequal in the world. Inequality is more pronounced in states with large landholdings focused on commodity production, such as Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Bahia and the Matopiba region, while it is lower in states with a greater presence of family farming and agricultural diversification, such as Santa Catarina, Amapá and Espírito Santo.

This extreme inequality contrasts with the biblical intention of redistribution, justice and care for the vulnerable, expressed in Leviticus 25. This contrast leads us to reflect on the role of the church with regard to social and food justice. The lack of equitable access to land and the food insecurity it causes directly affect the most vulnerable communities, especially women and small farmers, who depend on the land for their livelihood. Thus, the Jubilee, in Leviticus 25, can be understood as an ethical and theological model for building a more just and sustainable society.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can the Sabbathical and Jubilee year principles of Leviticus 25 be applied to address social inequalities and ensure food justice in contemporary society?



Take a moment to reflect and answer this question.

6. SHARING, I AM LIKE CHRIST

When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the Lord your God.

—Leviticus 19:9-10

This is a central chapter in Leviticus, as it informs the Israelites about a series of laws and instructions concerning ethical, moral and social issues and is widely regarded as a standard of communal living that reflects God's holiness. Let us consider how it applies to the context of food justice.

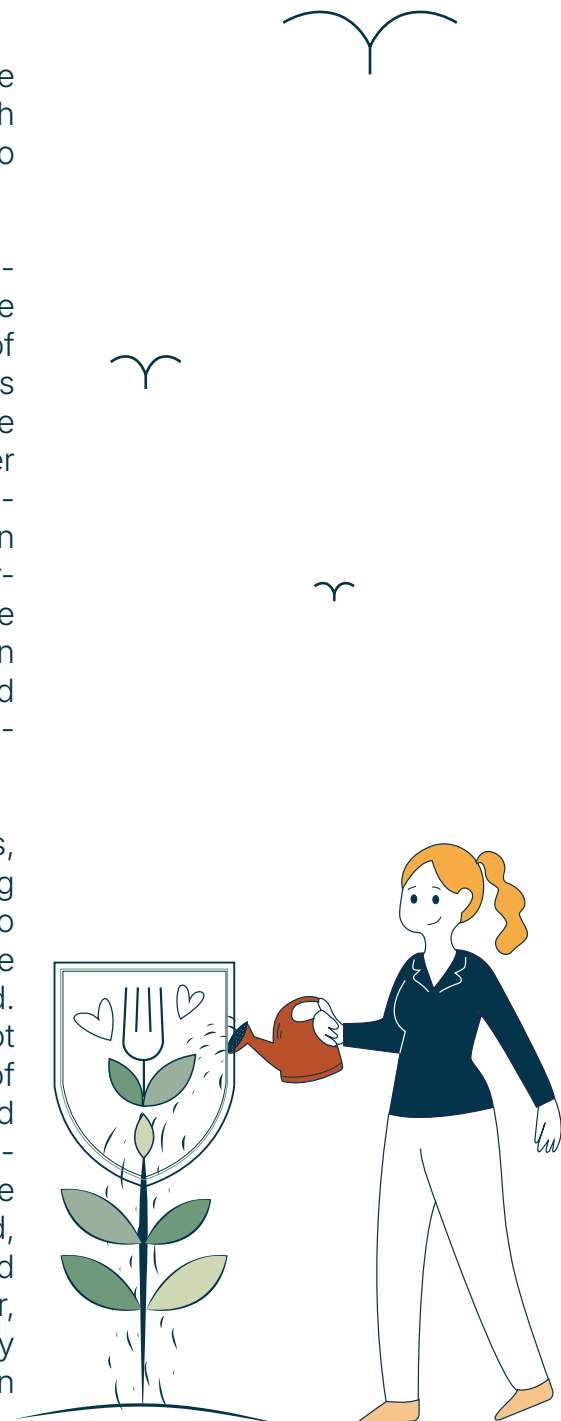
It begins with a call to holiness, a central theme in Leviticus. God commands people to be holy, just as He is holy, highlighting the need to live in a way that reflects the divine character in all areas of life. This call to holiness is closely linked to justice in human interactions, as we will see below.

The text instructs the Israelites to act justly and fairly in their dealings with others, especially in their relationship with the poor and foreigners. In addition to being an act of charity, the command to leave part of the harvest for the needy is a practice that reflects the social responsibility to share resources. Property and wealth are seen as gifts to be

shared, emphasizing that the relationship between wealth and responsibility is central to community life.

God thus establishes a model of solidarity, in which the harvest is not only the fruit of individual effort, but implies collective responsibility. The farmer is called to consider the needs of others, promoting interdependence within the community. This reinforces the idea that social justice must be practiced both within a specific community and outside, including the marginalized, such as strangers.

By mentioning foreigners, the importance of welcoming and caring for those who do not belong to the Israelite community is emphasized. This generosity should not be restricted to members of the community, but extended to all, regardless of their origin. This stance reflects the inclusive character of God, who demands hospitality and justice for all. The stranger, normally unprotected in many cultures, receives protection



and sustenance here, suggesting a divine commitment to equality and care for the vulnerable.

Moreover, this practice challenges contemporary economic logic, which is often based on the accumulation of wealth. By instructing the Israelites to "not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest," God places limits on the human desire to overharvest. The harvest should not be exploited to the maximum for the exclusive benefit of the owner, but should be shared so that others may also benefit. This limit can be seen as a concrete expression of gene-

rosity and justice, recognizing that natural resources are gifts from God and should be shared.

This text is a clear demonstration of God's care for distributive justice, ensuring that the most vulnerable are not neglected. The responsibility of providing sustenance is shared by the entire community. When we consider the current reality of food insecurity faced by millions of people, the message of these verses becomes relevant. God cares deeply about the equitable provision of essential resources for life, such as food, and invites us to reflect on how we apply these principles today.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How can we create societies that better care for the vulnerable, especially those who are food insecure?



Take a moment to reflect and answer this question.

III. ACTIONS AND PRACTICE

An initial series of integration actions

Objective: to raise awareness of the food crisis, encourage practical changes in daily life and promote community action.

Audience profile: local church, local group (university and/or professional), community leaders.

Duration: Three meetings, either weekly or making up an intensive of one or two days.

Application: Three meetings.

First meeting:
PANEL (1 h30)

Topic: How can the church/local group/community respond to the food crisis?

What is needed?

- Specialists (Nutritionist, farmer, local NGO representative)
- A mediator to organize the discussion and questions, and to control the time.

Questions for the discussion:

The food crisis

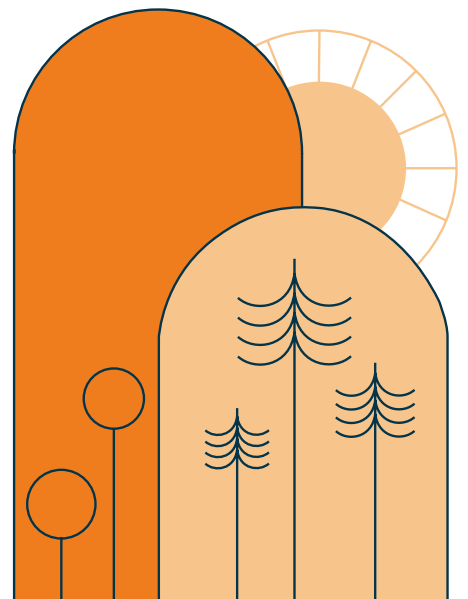
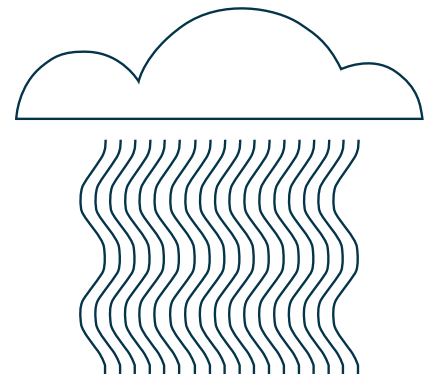
1. What is the reality of the food crisis in our community and how does it affect the most vulnerable?
2. What are the main causes of the food crisis and how can we address them?
3. What is the link between the food crisis, poverty, inequality and social injustice?

The role of the community

1. What is the role of the community in responding to the food crisis and how can we work as a team?
2. What initiatives and projects are already being implemented to combat the food crisis in our community?
3. How can we engage community leaders, faith-based organizations and local institutions to respond to the food crisis?

The theological perspective

1. What is the theological perspective on food justice and how can we integrate it into our response to the food crisis?
2. How does theology help us understand the relationship



between food, land and community?

3. What are the theological implications of the food crisis and how can we respond to them ethically and morally?

Community actions

1. What practical actions can we take as individuals and as a community to fight the food crisis?
2. How can we support local farmers and promote sustainable agriculture in our community?
3. What policies and programs can we support to address the food crisis in our community and beyond?

Note:

This is only a suggested model. You can adapt it taking into account the context and the objective.

Second Meeting : WORKSHOPS (1h30)

Workshops may be held simultaneously and participants will have to choose between several of them.

Topic: Planning a sustainable menu.

- Objective: To teach participants how to plan meals with less waste, using local foods and cooking them in their entirety.
- Activity: Demonstration of recipes with PANCs or reusable leftovers.

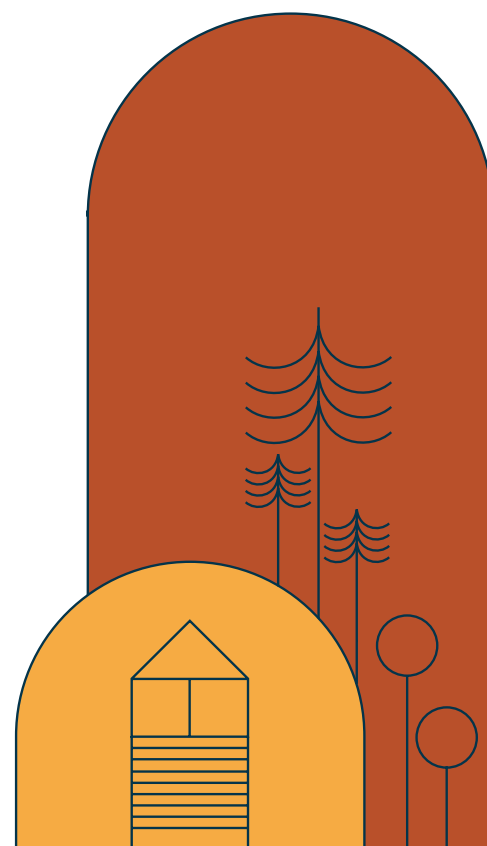
Topic: Using food in its entirety.

- Objective: To raise awareness about food waste, and present data on the social, economic and environmental impact of food waste.
- Activity: Demonstrate preparation, with tips for cleaning and storing reusable foods. Create recipes with unconventional ingredients, such as PANC¹, peels or leftovers. Set waste reduction goals at home and in the community.

Topic: Food Justice

- Objective: To contextualize the problem of unequal access to food based on data and theological perspectives.
- Activity: Biblical analysis with texts such as Leviticus 25 (Ju-

1. Translator's note: according to Wikipedia, "Plantas alimentícias não convencionais (lit. 'non-conventional food plants'), known by the acronym PANC, is an academic and popular movement in Brazil in favor of propagating and foraging for unconventional edible plants. The name refers to species with food potential that are not consumed on a large scale (such as *Victoria amazonica*), or to parts that are not usually consumed in common plants (such as sweet potato leaves)."



bilee Year). Discussion of real cases of solidarity initiatives in food.

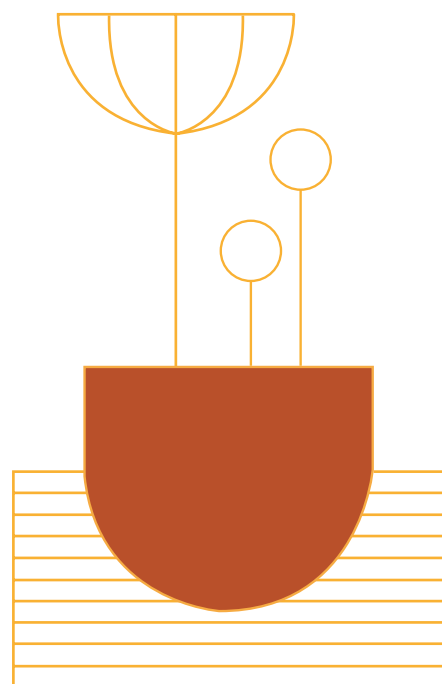
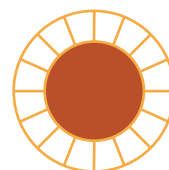
Third Meeting: **SOLIDARITY BASKETS**

How to get started:

- Frequency (single or recurrent).
- Beneficiaries (families in social vulnerability, people living on the street, specific communities).

At the initial stage it is important to consider some points:

- » Mapping needs: Work with local leadership to identify who really needs the baskets.
 - » Registration: create a basic list with name, address and number of people in the family to avoid duplicates and improve logistics.
 - » Respect for privacy: Be careful not to disclose beneficiaries' data and preserve their dignity.
- Calculate the cost of a basic food basket and a budget accordingly.
 - Prepare the baskets: alimentos de qualidade, inclua itens regionais e culturalmente relevantes para a comunidade.
 - Customize the baskets (if possible): Tailor products to the specific needs of the community (e.g. gluten-free foods for people with celiac disease, children's favorites for families with children etc).
 - Organization: prepare the baskets in a clean and well-organized space. Divide tasks among volunteers to optimize the process.
 - Logistics and distribution:
 - » Define delivery points: choose locations accessible to beneficiaries, such as churches, schools or community associations.
 - » Transportation: Plan transportation to more distant locations or for people who are unable to travel.
 - » Schedules: Stipulate specific times to avoid crowds and long waits.
 - » Delivery method: Use the registration list during delivery to avoid confusion.
 - Communication:
 - » Campaign promotion: use social networks, brochures and associations to reach more followers and more volunteers.
 - » Awareness: Inform the community about the importance of the action and motivate more people to contribute.
 - Accompaniment and Transparency:
 - » Reporting: Document the entire process and share the results with donors and volunteers.



- » Feedback: Collect beneficiaries' opinions to improve future actions.
- » Evaluation: Analyze what worked well and what were the challenges faced, to improve logistics in future actions.



Remark: This is a time-consuming action and during the meeting you can decide which stage of the project each of the above issues corresponds to, so that you defer some of them till later.



Community Kitchen

Objective: Distribute free or affordable meals. Offer cooking workshops (e.g., food reuse).

Mapping demand

- Identify who will be served (families in need, people living on the street, the elderly).
- Estimate the number of people and frequency of this service.



Kitchen Structuring

• Space

Evaluate whether the church has adequate space or whether an existing space will need to be adapted. Verify that the premises have:

- » A sink with running water.
- » An area for food preparation, cooking and storage.
- » Basic equipment (stove, refrigerator, tables, shelves). And basic items:
 - Pots, pans, cutlery and large plates (disposable or reusable).
 - Cutting and preparation utensils (knives, boards, blender).
 - Seek donations or support from local companies for the acquisition.

• Hygiene and Safety

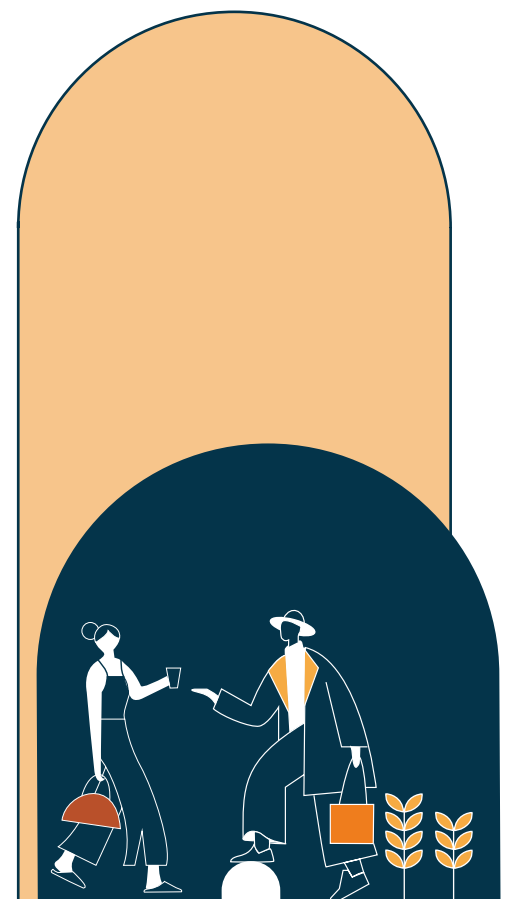
Follow sanitary standards to ensure food safety.

- » Wear gloves, hats, aprons and use disinfectant soap.
- » Conduct basic food hygiene training with volunteers.

• Team Formation

Recrutar equipe

- » Divide the tasks: cooks, cleaning assistants, logistics and waiters.
- » Train the team to operate in an efficient and welcoming manner.



- Companies:

Seek support from:

- » Local businesses and markets for food donations.
- » Nutritionists to prepare balanced menus.
- » NGOs to guide them.

- Resource capture

Donations: campaign in the church and in the community to obtain:

- » Money.
- » Non-perishable food.
- » Equipment and utensils.

- Events

Hold bazaars, raffles or charity luncheons.

Kitchen preparation:

- Create a menu:

- » Plan nutritious, tasty and affordable meals.
- » Use regional and easily accessible foods.
- » Give priority to the complete use of the food (e.g., stems, peels).

- Define schedules and rules

- » Stipulate the days and hours of operation.
- » Determine distribution criteria (if necessary).

- Records and Control

- » Keep a record of meals served and food storage.
- » Check it regularly to ensure efficient operation.

Community involvement

- Awareness.

- » Promote meetings to discuss food security and encourage support.

- Food Education.

- » Offer workshops to teach simple and accessible recipes, including the use of Non-Conventional Edible Plants (NCEPs - using parts that are not usually consumed).

Sustainability

- Monitor impacts:

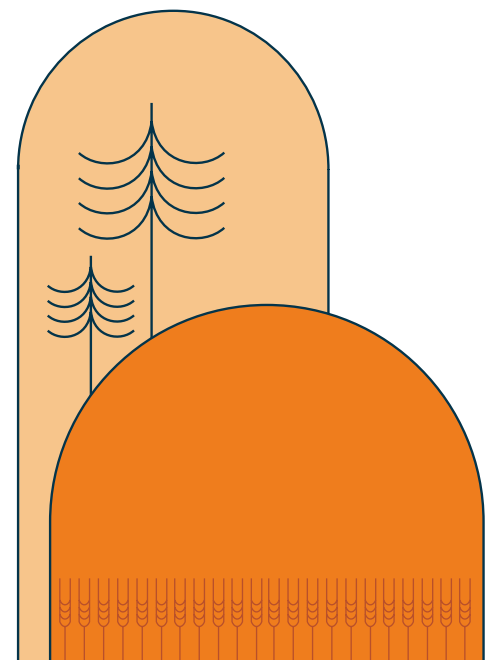
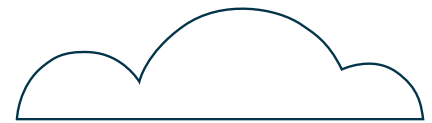
- » Periodically reevaluate needs and results.

- Guarantee continuity:

- » Make permanent groups and maintain the church's commitment.

- Reduce waste:

- » Implement sustainable practices, such as composting organic waste.



Community gardens

Objective: To produce fresh and healthy food to meet the needs of needy families in the community, teaching sustainable agricultural practices, composting and environmental conservation. In addition, the space will serve as an environment to transmit biblical values, encouraging reflections on divine provision and the importance of interdependence.

Choose a space

- It must be accessible, with good sun exposure (at least 6 hours a day).
- Having a water source nearby.
- Evaluate the quality of the soil or the possibility of creating raised beds.

Organize the space

- Divide areas for garden beds, composting, tool storage, pathways and a community space.

Organize the garden beds

- Raised beds are ideal if the soil is of poor quality.
- Use a measurement as a standard for easy access (e.g., 1 meter wide).

Implement irrigation systems

- They can be manual (sprinklers) or automated (drip).

Crop choice

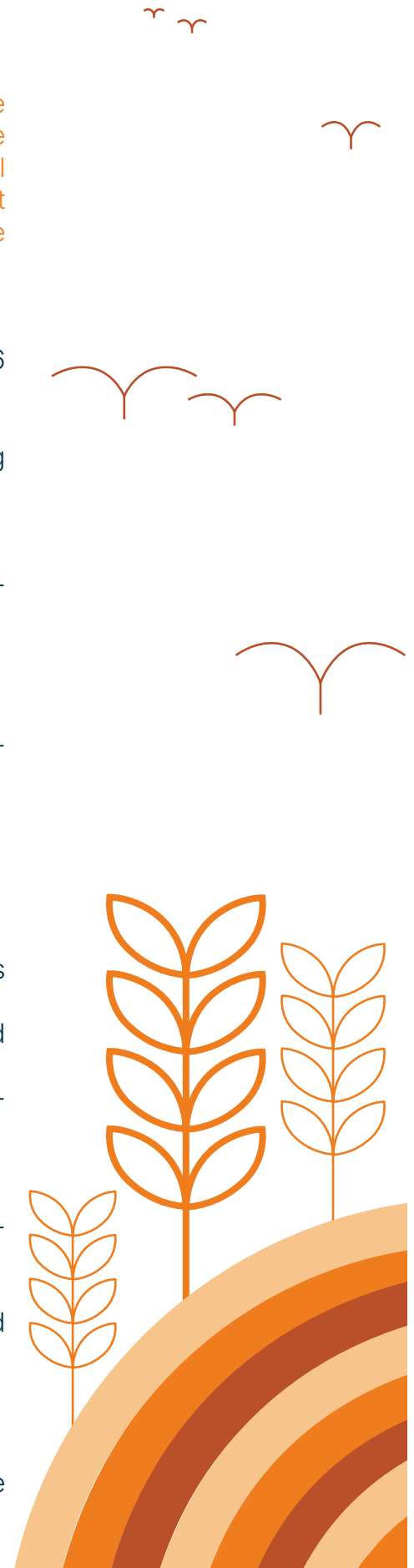
- Take climate and season into consideration: choose plants suitable for the region and time of year.
- Preferably local varieties: They are usually more adapted and productive.
- Promote diversity: vegetables, herbs, fruits and even non-conventional food plants (PANCs).

Team organization

- Delegate responsibilities: Divide tasks such as planting, irrigation, maintenance and harvesting.
- Create a schedule: Determine days and times for activities.
- Promote regular meetings to discuss garden progress and solve problems.

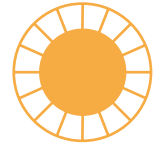
Sustainability

- Use organic waste as fertilizer for the soil.
- Reuse materials: Use pallets, tires and PET bottles to create flower beds or delimit spaces.



Education and Integration

- Conduct workshops and events: Teach growing, composting and cooking techniques.
- Encourage children's participation: create educational spaces.
- Document progress: keep photos, stories and lessons learned to engage more people.



Solidarity Fairs

Objective: Organize fairs on church property for local farmers to sell their products directly.

Form a team

- Gather church volunteers with skills in logistics, communication and financial management.
- Include volunteers or representatives of the communities involved.

Set a date and location

- Choose a frequency: every 15 days or once a month, for example.
- Look for a large place with tables to display the products.

Involve local farmers

- Seek out farmers: identify interested local farmers, including smallholder farmers and those working with PANCs.
- Explain the objective: to make the solidarity fair a space for direct sales, without intermediaries, benefiting both producers and consumers.

Plan logistics

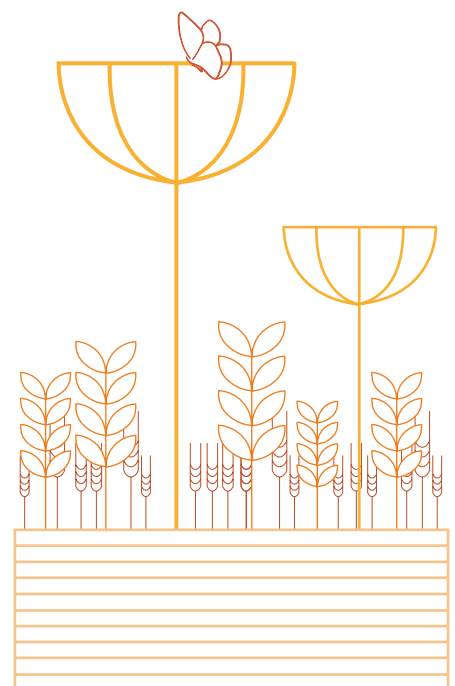
- Booths or tables: Provide structures for displaying products.
- Power and water: Check if electrical outlets or access to water is needed.

Product diversity

- Variety of products: Include fruits, vegetables, grains, artisanal and processed products (such as jams or breads).
- Selection criteria: Preferably local, organic and sustainably grown products.

Disclosure and engagement

- Promotion: Use social media, church bulletins, posters and invitations in local communities.
- Involve the community: encourage church members to participate and assist in outreach.



Complementary activities

- The fair can be used to promote other activities such as:
 - » Workshops and presentations: organize events on healthy eating, culinary workshops with PANCs, or environmental conservation.
 - » Children's area: Organize children's activities to attract families.

Financial management and outreach

- Local partnerships: seek support from local businesses or church members to defray some expenses, if necessary.

Accompaniment and improvement

- Feedback: Ask farmers and consumers about the experience.
- Evaluate impact: Monitor sales and benefits generated for the community and producers.



Member Training

Objective: Conduct workshops to train and involve church members to work on food security and sustainability projects.

Theme 1: Prayer and action for food justice

Objective: To relate spirituality and transformative practices for the sake of food justice.

Content:

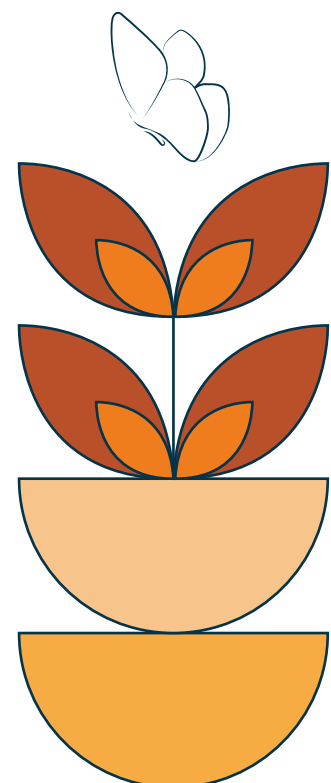
- Reflection on the concept of "incarnational prayer" (prayer that leads to action).
- Examples of how churches can be involved in food distribution or partnerships with local farmers.

Activity:

- Creation of prayer and action groups.
- Plan practical actions such as community gardens or donations of sustainable food.

Theme 2: Knowing and growing PANCs²

Objective: To introduce the concept of Non-Conventional Food Plants (PANCs) and promote their cultivation.



2. See footnote 1, above.

Content:

- Importance of PANCs for food security and environmental conservation.
- Examples of local PANCs and their properties.

Activity:

- PANC identification and cultivation practices.
- Discussion on how PANCs can be integrated into the community diet and promoted in churches.



Theme 3: Women in Food Justice

Objective: Empower women to lead initiatives that promote food justice, recognizing their essential role.

Content:

- Study of the imago Dei in Genesis 1:27 and the role of women as co-creators and caretakers.
- The impact of women in food bioconservation, production and distribution.



Activity:

- Exchange of traditional and sustainable recipes.
- Development of plans for women-led projects in the community.

Theme 4: Food Education and Sustainability

Objective: To promote healthy and sustainable eating habits in the faith community.

Content:

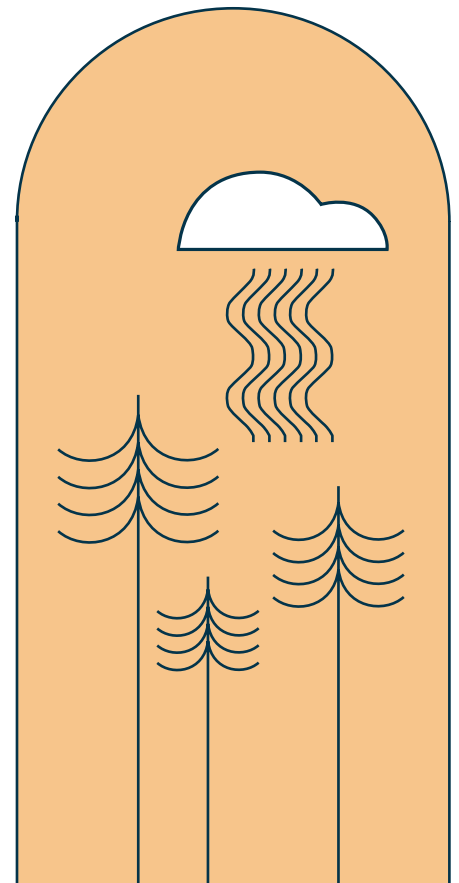
- The relationship between healthy eating, sustainability and Christian stewardship.
- Economical and sustainable ways of improving food.

Activity:

- Practical sustainable cooking classes.
- Group discussions on how to promote food awareness in churches.

Theme 5: Reducing waste and promoting generosity

Objective: To teach practices to reduce food waste and encourage generosity in the use of resources.



Content:

- Data on food waste and its impact.
- Connection with the biblical teaching on generosity (Luke 3:11, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

Activity:

- Identify wasteful habits in daily life.
- Plan initiatives to redistribute excess food in the community.

Community Composting

Objective: Install food waste composting systems that can be used in gardens or distributed to small producers.

Planning:

- Find a location: choose a space that is accessible to participants, has good ventilation, moderate sunlight and is protected from flooding or heavy rain.
- Community organizing: bring together community stakeholders (church and students) to discuss the proposal, define responsibilities and create a maintenance schedule.

Structure

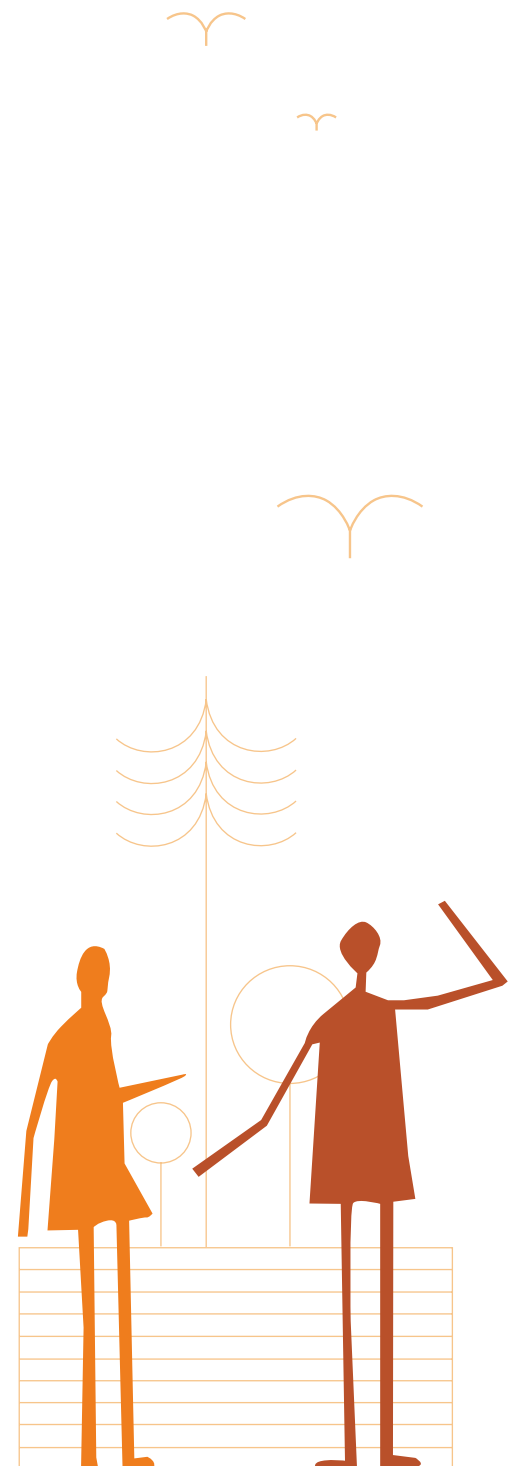
- Determine a composting system:
 - » Open-air patio: Ideal for rural communities or areas with ample space.
 - » Compostable boxes: Suitable for urban areas, using drums, pallets or ready-made boxes.
 - » Windrows: High volume composite windrows used in larger projects.
- Waste separation: have containers to collect organic waste (fruit peels, vegetable scraps, coffee grounds) and avoid non-compostable materials such as plastics, meats and fats.

Education and commitment

- Training: : Offer workshops to teach the basic principles of composting.
- Communication materials: Use brochures, posters and social media to provide guidance on what can and cannot be composted.
- Collection routine: Establish set days and times for participants to deposit waste.

Operation

- Balanced layers:
 - » Green material: Kitchen waste (rich in nitrogen).
 - » Brown material: Sawdust, dry leaves, cardboard (rich in car-



bon).

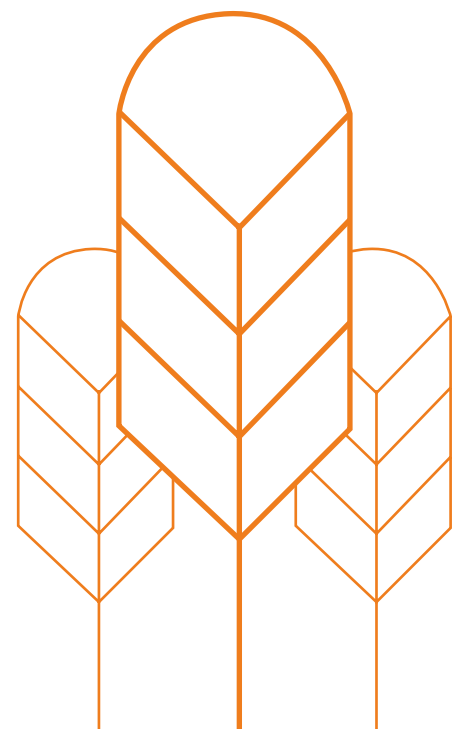
- Aeration: Move the compost regularly to avoid odors and ensure oxygenation.
- Moisture control: Keep the compost moist, avoid excess water by adjusting with water or dry materials.

Maintenance

- Monitoring: check for temperature, humidity and the presence of pests.
- Problem solving:
 - » Strong odor: add more dry material (brown) and rotate.
 - » Slow process: Check the proportion of materials and aeration.
- Rotation: separate batches at different composting stages.

Sustainability

- Documentation: keep data on the process and results to inspire other communities.
- Partnerships: seek support from local organizations, NGOs or companies interested in sustainability.
- Upscaling: encourage more residents to participate and explore new related initiatives, such as community gardens.



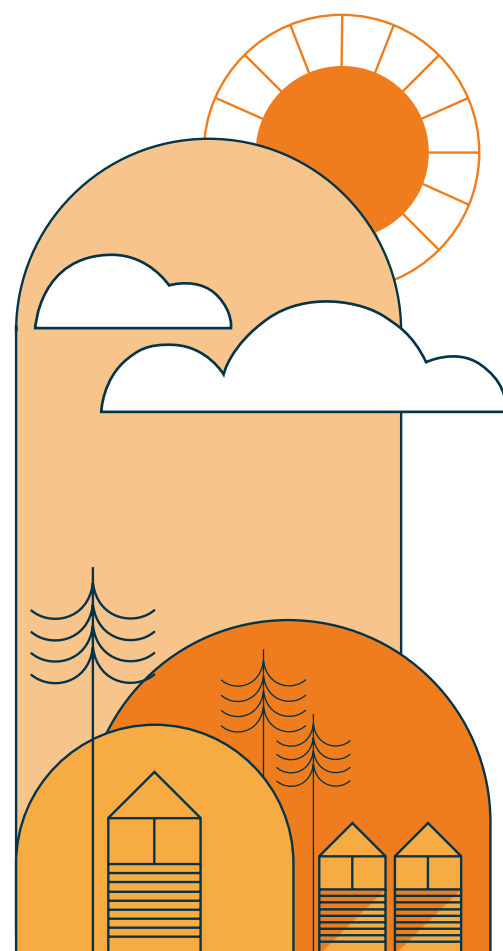
General guidelines

- Seek help from professionals and experienced people (agronomists, foresters, biologists, local producers).
- To help implement the strategies, working as a group you can set objectives that follow the SMART method:

THE SMART METHOD		
CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SAMPLE GUIDING QUESTION
S (Specific)	The objective must be clear and defined, without ambiguity.	What do I want to achieve? Why is it important? Who is involved? Where will it take place? What feature is needed?
M (Measurable)	It must be possible to measure progress and determine when it will be achieved.	How will I know that the objective has been achieved? What metrics will I use to measure success?
A (Achievable)	The objective must be realistic, taking into account resources and constraints.	Is this objective feasible and what steps should I take to achieve it?
R (Relevant)	It must be meaningful and aligned with broader objectives or values.	Is this objective important to me or my organization? Is it aligned with other priorities?
T (Time-bound)	There must be a clear and firm deadline.	What is the timeframe to achieve this objective? What can I do now? What needs to be done over time?

Tabla 1. Explanatory table of the Smart method.

Source: Uninter. (2019, octubre 25). *Metodología SMART*. De Olho no Futuro.



IV. INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY

RUTH 2:1-12

Historical context:

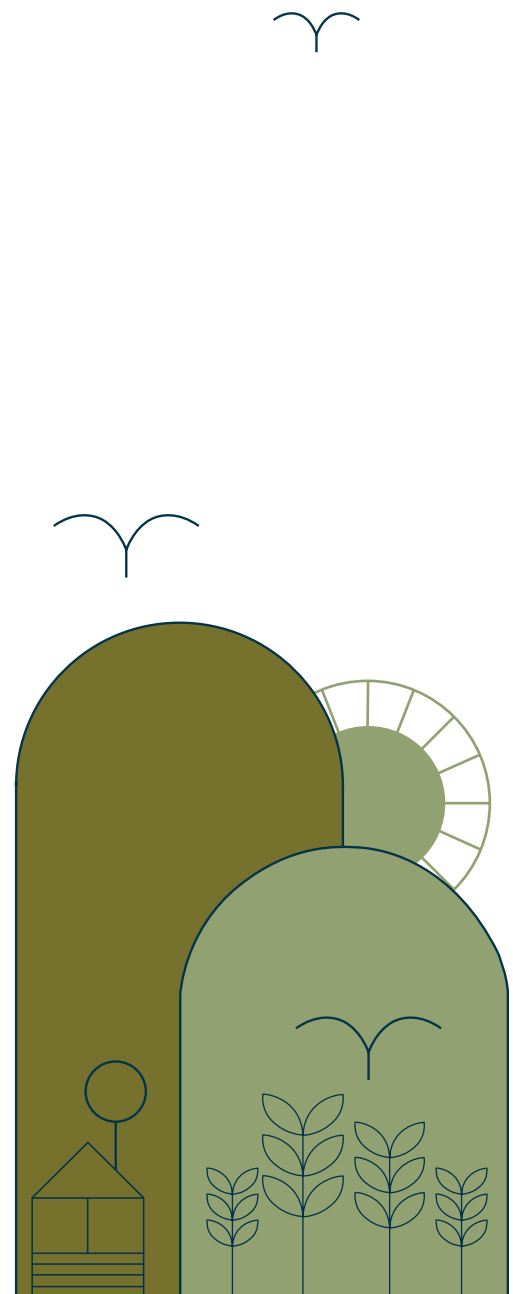
The story of Ruth occurs "in the time when the judges ruled" (Ruth 1:1), a period characterized by political, moral and spiritual instability in Israel. It was a time of cyclical crises: the people sinned, suffered oppression, cried out for deliverance, and God raised up judges to rescue them. Naomi and her family migrated to Moab because of the famine in Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1). Such displacement was common in periods of drought or bad harvests. Later, Naomi returns to Bethlehem after hearing that "the Lord had come to the help of his people by providing food" (Ruth 1:6), suggesting a period of agricultural recovery.

Religious context:

The Law of Moses prescribed specific care for the poor, orphans, widows and foreigners, emphasizing that Israel should remember its own experience of slavery in Egypt (Deut 24:19-22). The practice of leaving leftovers for others to glean at harvest time was not only an economic obligation, but also an act of worship to God and a recognition of His sovereignty over the land.

Cultural context:

Israelite society was essentially agrarian, and land was fundamental for the subsistence and identity of the people. The harvest was carried out in stages. After the main harvest, what was left over (fallen ears or edges of the fields) was left for the poor, orphans, widows and foreigners, in accordance with Mosaic law (Lev 19:9-10; Deut 24:19-22). The practice of "gleaning" (collecting the remains of the harvest) was a form of sustenance for the marginalized and part of the social justice established by God. Ruth, as a widow and a Moabite stranger, was a vulnerable person. Women in her situation depended on relatives or the generosity of the community for survival. However, her willingness to work deviates from the expected passive role of women in similar situations. The interaction between Ruth and Boaz demonstrates the dynamics of protection and hospitality in a patriarchal society. Boaz, as a landowner, acts as a protector and provider, reflecting that culture's ideal of a righteous man.



Observation questions:

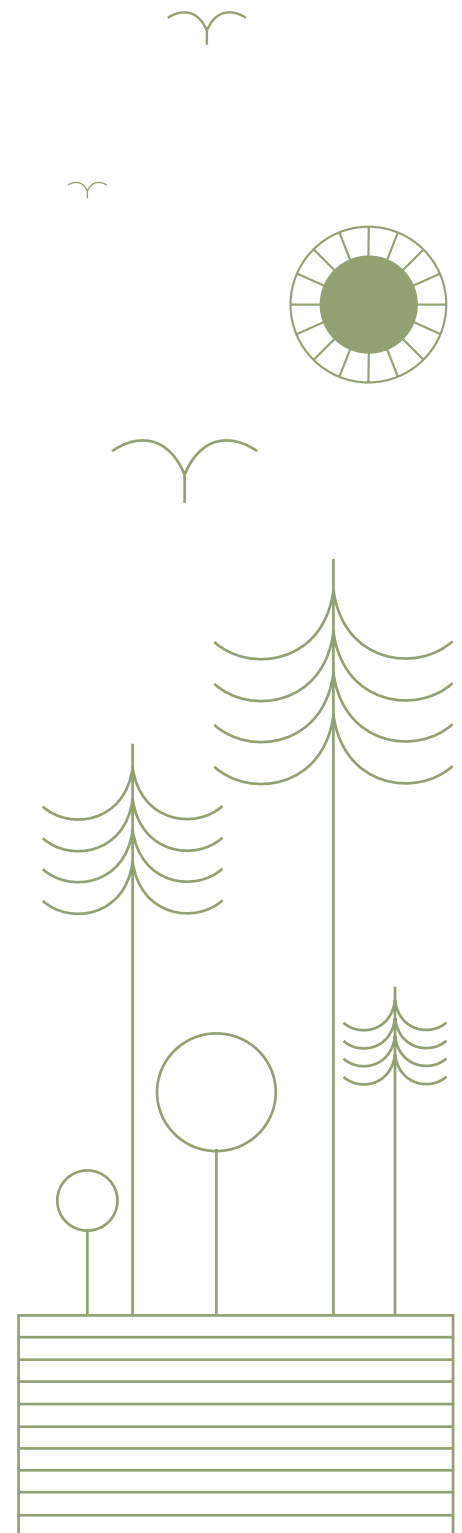
1. Who are the characters mentioned in this passage and what are their main actions?
2. How is Boaz described in this text? What attitudes does he demonstrate toward Ruth?
3. What words or phrases indicate Boaz's attitude toward the needy?

Interpretation questions:

1. What was the role of the remnants of the harvest (the fallen ears of grain) in the cultural and religious context of Israel?
2. How is the law of Moses on caring for the poor (e.g., Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19-22) reflected in Boaz's attitude?
3. How does Ruth's willingness to work and Boaz's protection illustrate how God cares for the marginalized?
4. How does this narrative point to principles of provision and justice that transcend the immediate context?

Application questions:

1. A attitude de Boaz em res- pBoaz's attitude in respecting the dignity of Ruth, a foreigner, challenges us to reflect: how can our actions promote equity in access to food, especially for marginalized groups such as women, immigrants or people living in poverty?
2. Boaz puts God's law into practice not just as an obligation, but with a generous heart. How can we cultivate a mindset that goes beyond following rules and instead seek to be intentional in meeting the dietary needs of others?
3. Ruth works diligently picking ears of corn and Boaz creates a safe and welcoming environment for her. How might churches and communities create "safe spaces" that help people actively participate in solutions such as community gardens, farmers' markets, or composting?
4. Boaz's care for Ruth shows God's kindness to all human beings. How might our communities become a practical expression of God's care, ensuring that no one goes without basic necessities such as food?



ISAIAH 58:6-12

Historical context:

Isaiah 58 was written after the exile, once the people of Israel returned from the Babylonian captivity (6th century B.C.). Despite having returned to their land, they faced economic, social and religious difficulties. There was apparent religious devotion, but their practices were disconnected from social justice. Oppression of the poor, exploitation of workers and neglect of the needy were serious problems in the community.

Cultural context:

Israelite society was based on an agrarian structure, where the economy and security depended on land and collective labor. Fasting was a common practice of repentance and seeking divine intervention, but people performed it as a mechanical rite, without seeking justice. Jewish culture valued solidarity and care for the needy, but these principles were being neglected.

Religious context:

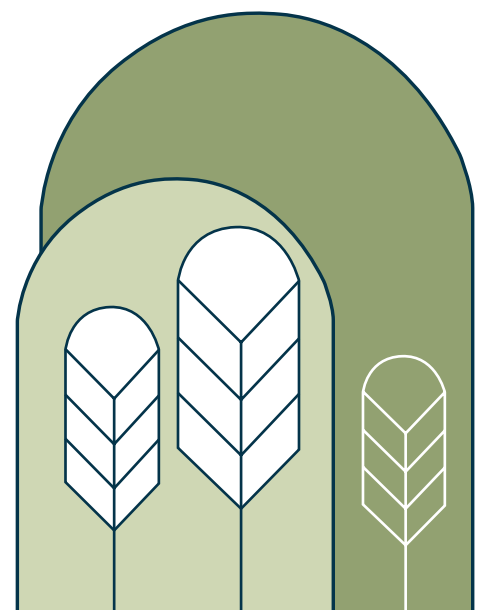
Israel's religion was based on a covenant with God, which demanded not only rituals, but also a commitment to justice. The prophets frequently denounced the hypocrisy of empty worship and called the people to genuine repentance. In Isaiah 58, God reveals that true fasting does not consist only of abstinence from food, but of the practice of justice and mercy.

Observation questions:

1. What actions does God consider true fasting, according to verses 6 and 7?
2. What does God promise to those who perform these actions, according to verses 8-12?
3. What images does the text use to describe the results of obedience?
4. Who is the subject of the actions in the text? Who is called to act and who benefits from the actions?

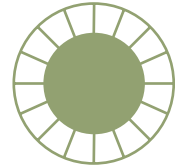
Interpretation questions:

1. Why does God reject religious practices that do not lead to social transformation and welcome actions of justice (v. 6-7)?
2. What do the promises of restoration and prosperity (v. 8-12) teach us about the connection between righteousness and blessing?
3. How does the injustice denounced in Isaiah 58 (such as exploitation and starvation) resemble the current realities of hunger and food inequality?



Application questions:

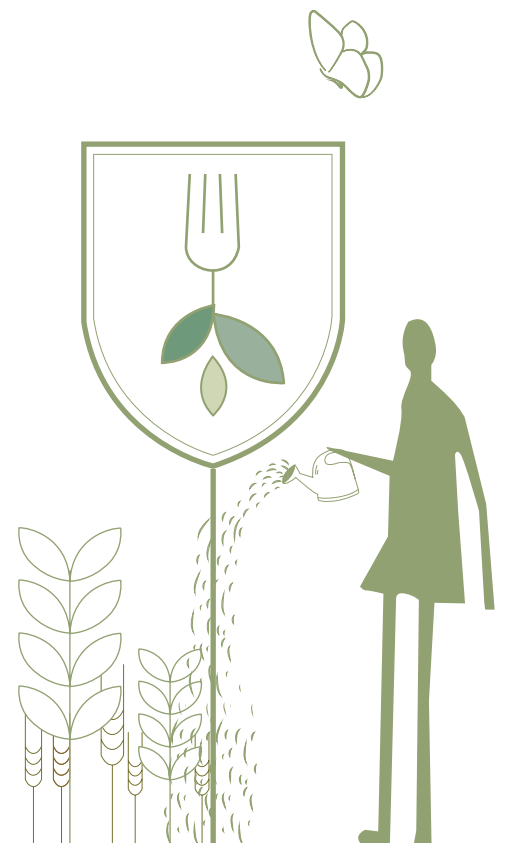
1. How can I ensure that my religious practices are not mere rituals, but transform the lives of those in need? What practical changes can I make in my routine to share bread with the hungry (v. 7)?
2. How can my church or discipleship group become a "restorer of streets" (v. 12), promoting food justice in the community? Are there local initiatives to fight hunger where I can actively collaborate?
3. How can I join the fight for fairer food systems in my city, country or region? Am I willing to speak out against practices that perpetuate hunger and inequality, even when my comfort is compromised?
4. How can I promote the responsible use of God's creation to feed the hungry while ensuring that resources are preserved for future generations? How does caring for the earth relate to the call to be a "well-watered garden" (v. 11)?

**PSALM 65:9-13 & PSALM 104:14-23****Historical context:**

Os Salmos 65 e 104 foram escritos em um contexto agrário, onde a vida dependia muito das colheitas e das chuvas sazonais. Israel era uma nação agrícola e pastoril, e a provisão de Deus para a terra era vista como uma bênção fundamental para a sobrevivência. Esses salmos refletem a gratidão do povo por um ano de abundante colheita e a realização de que a fertilidade da terra era um sinal de bondade divina. No caso do Salmo 104, há uma ênfase especial na ordem da criação e na provisão de Deus para todas as criaturas.

Cultural context:

Na cultura do Oriente Médio antigo, muitas civilizações acreditavam que a fertilidade da terra dependia da benevolência dos deuses. No entanto, Israel via Deus como o soberano Criador que regava a terra e fornecia alimento para todas as criaturas. Festas judaicas, como a Festa das Semanas (Pentecostes) e a Festa dos Tabernáculos, estavam diretamente ligadas à colheita e à gratidão pela provisão divina. O Salmo 104 reforça esta perspectiva, enfatizando a interdependência de todas as criaturas e o papel de Deus em sustentar a vida.



Religious context:

Psalms 65 and 104 celebrate God as the Lord of nature and provision. The rain, the rivers and the abundance of the fields were signs of God's faithfulness to his covenant with Israel. The link between the fertility of the land and God's righteousness is also present elsewhere in Scripture (e.g., Deuteronomy 11:13-15). Psalm 104, in particular, describes the harmony of creation and how God sustains all life, reinforcing the idea that the earth belongs to God and that humans are stewards of its resources.

Questions Psalm 65:9-13**Observation questions:**

1. What does God do for the earth according to the text? List the verbs that describe his actions.
2. What natural images are used to describe God's provision?
3. How is the abundance of the earth described in the psalm?

Interpretation questions:

1. Why does the psalmist associate the abundance of the earth with the goodness of God?
2. How does this cycle of provision (rain, grain, livestock) reflect God's character?
3. What is the relationship between the material blessings described in the

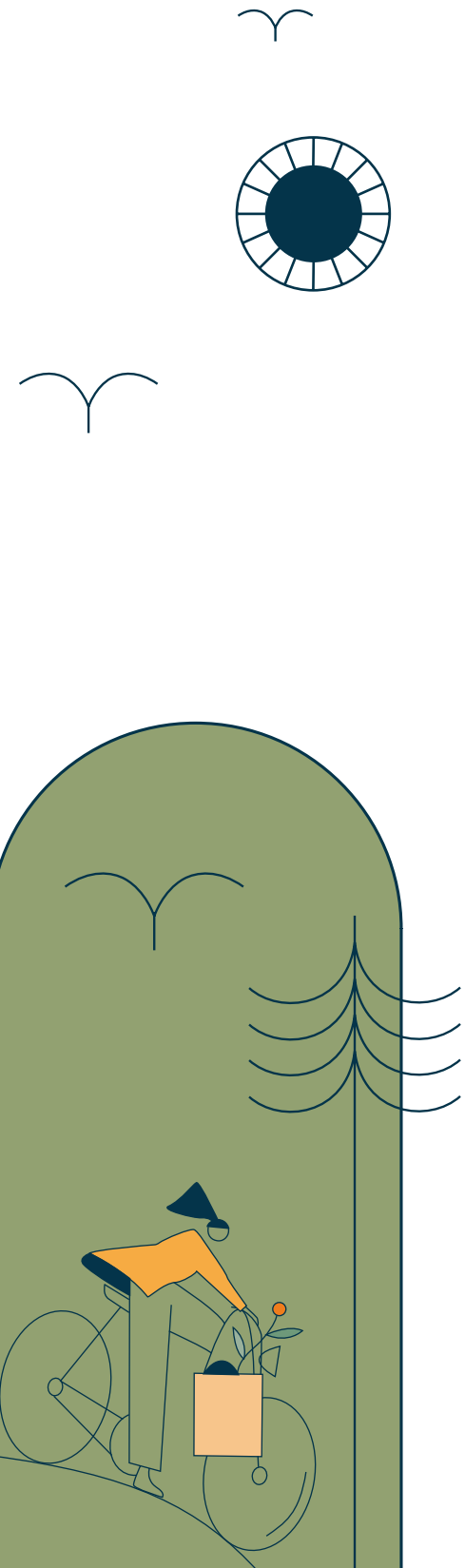
psalm and the response of joy and celebration of creation?

Application questions:

1. God enriches the earth abundantly, but many people still go hungry. How does this reality challenge us to be good stewards of God's resources?
2. In the context of your interpersonal relationships, what attitudes can reflect God's goodness and generosity?
3. How can your community celebrate and share God's provision?
4. How can actions toward food justice bring joy and hope to those in need?

Questions Psalm 104:14-23**Observation questions:**

1. What elements of creation are mentioned as instruments for sustaining living things?
2. What types of foods are highlighted in this text?
3. How do humans, animals and even natural cycles interact within the framework of God-provided sustenance?
4. What role does God play in the process of growth and food provision?

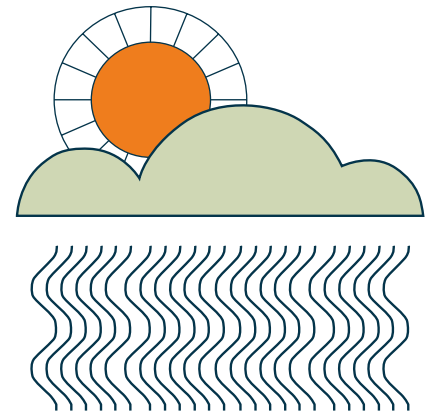


Interpretation questions:

1. How does this text relate human activity (such as agriculture) to divine provision?
2. Why does the author of the psalm emphasize that God is the source of sustenance for all living things?
3. How does the cycle of life and creation describe the interdependence between humans and the rest of creation?

Application questions:

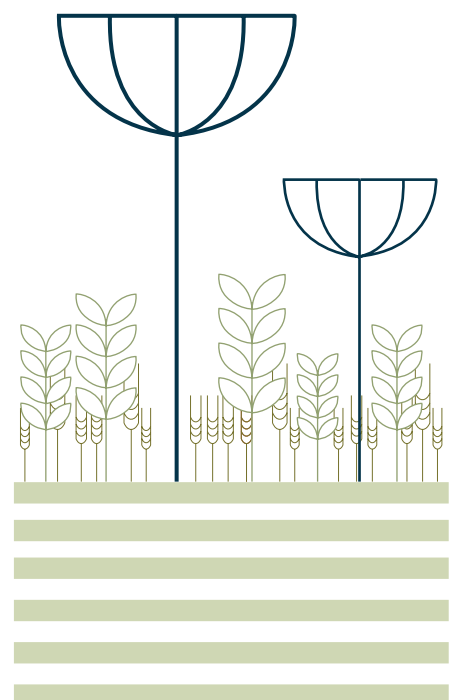
1. How can we recognize God as the provider of our food in our daily practices?
2. To what extent does the realization that God feeds us all challenge us to share resources with those most in need?
3. The text suggests an interdependence between humans and creation. How can we work to protect and preserve natural resources to ensure a fair distribution of food?

**PSALM 146:5-9****Historical context:**

Psalm 146 is part of the set of psalms that end this book with hymns of praise to God. It was probably written in the post-exilic period, when Israel was rebuilding its identity after the Babylonian exile. In this context, the people were surrounded by political and social challenges, and dependence on God for provision and justice was essential. The psalmist contrasts the ephemeral nature of human leaders with God's eternal faithfulness.

Contexto cultural:

In Ancient Middle Eastern culture, kings and rulers were often seen as intermediaries between the gods and the people. Psalm 146, however, rejects reliance on rulers and exalts God's sovereignty. The text also reflects the social ethics of the Torah, which emphasizes care for vulnerable groups such as strangers, orphans and widows (Deuteronomy 10:18; 24:17-21). Justice was an essential element in Israel's social organization.



Religious context:

Psalm 146 reflects a theology of complete trust in God as the only ruler worthy of praise. It stresses that God is the creator, provider and defender of the oppressed, fulfilling promises of justice and redemption. This is a perspective also present in prophets such as Isaiah and Jeremiah, who denounce injustice and point to divine care for the marginalized.

Observation questions:

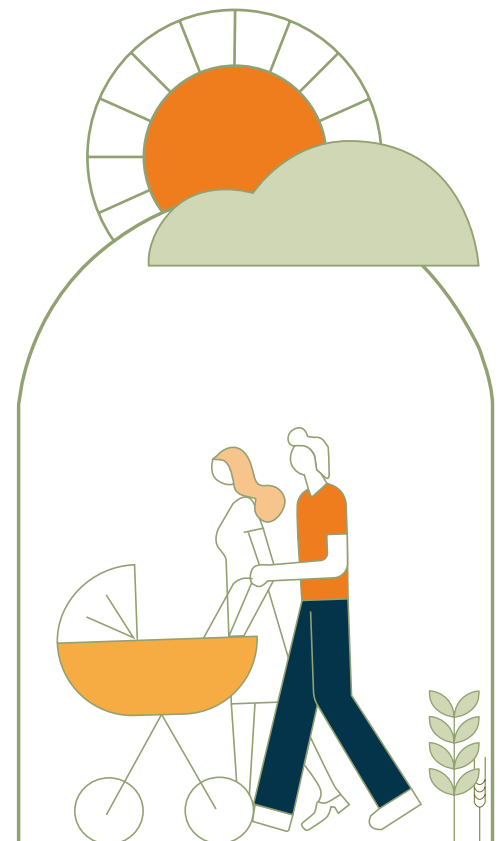
1. What is the source of happiness mentioned in verse 5?
2. What does the text say about God's character in relation to creation (v. 6)?
3. What concrete actions does God take to help those in need (v. 7-9)?
4. Who are the specific social groups mentioned in the text?

Interpretation questions:

1. How does God's faithfulness relate to creation (v. 6) and social justice (v. 7-9)?
2. Why is God's care for strangers, orphans and widows important? What does this teach us about fairness?
3. What does it mean that God "thwarts the plans of the wicked" (v. 9)? Who would the "wicked" be?

Application questions:

1. In what ways can we imitate God's character by "feeding the hungry" and "protecting the vulnerable"?
2. Who are the "oppressed" and the "hungry" in our community today? How can we advocate for them?
3. How can we participate in the "kingdom of God" here and now, recognizing that He reigns forever?



V. APPENDIX 1:

UGGESTED STRUCTURE FOR USING THE SIX REFLECTIONS

1. Opening and welcome (5 min)

- Greet participants and create a welcoming environment.
- Short prayer (optional, depending on the profile of the group).
- Simple opening question to engage attendees (e.g., "What was the most memorable meal you ever had?").

2. Introduction to the topic of the day (5 min)

- Brief summary of the day's text (facilitator highlights the main points).
- **Motivating question:** Pose a question to stimulate reflection on the theme (Example: What does it mean, in practice, to "govern creation" as God does? - Question related to text 1 in the reflections section.)

3. Structured discussion (30 min)

- **Examples:**
 - » Theological puzzle (Divide participants into small groups to discuss parts of the text and then share their reflections in the larger group).
 - » Concept map (Each participant writes a key word from the text that had the greatest impact on him/her and shares the reason why).
 - » Case study (Present a situation and discuss how to apply the principles of the text).

4. Reflection and practical application (15 min)

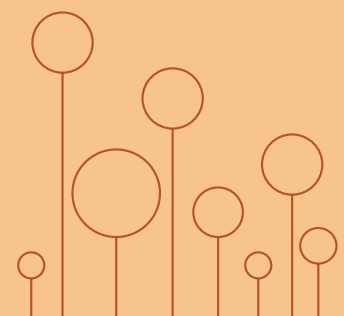
- **Reflective question** (question asked at the end of the reflection).
- **Voluntary sharing** (participants share practical gestures or commitments they wish to make).
- **Take-home ideas** (each person writes down a key learning to apply during the week).

5. Finish and next steps (5 min)

- Synthesis of the main lessons learned.
- Orientation on the next meeting (topic, text and possible practical challenges).
- Closing prayer (optional).

Remark

*This is just
a suggestion,
you can adapt it
taking into account
the context and
the objectives*



VI. APPENDIX 2:

SUGGESTED STRUCTURE FOR USING THE INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDIES

1. Opening prayer / presentation (10 min)

- You can start with an introductory activity if people do not know each other or an icebreaker.
- The prayer here is optional, depending on the group and the context.

2. Reading of the biblical text (5 min)

- Read the selected text aloud.
- If possible, ask several people to read different versions.

3. Observation: what does the text say? (10 min)

- They are simpler and easier to identify in the text;
- They help participants to situate themselves in the text, to understand what is happening;
- You don't need to go any further, there will be time for that in the interpretation questions.

4. Interpretation: what does the text mean? (15 min)

- It is the moment to deepen the knowledge about the explored text;
- It is important to know the context of the text studied; some basic context is provided in the Bible study guides above.

5. Application: how does this apply to my life? (15 min)

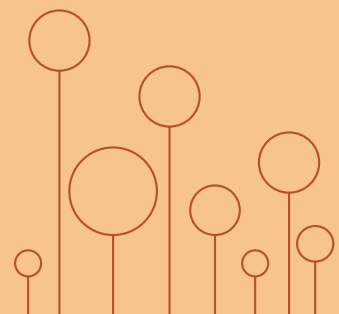
- It's time to look at yourself and think about how the message of the text applies to your life and/or context.
- Encourage each participant to define a practical action based on the study.

6. Final (5 min)

- Close this time by thanking the attendees for their presence and participation.
- Prayer is optional.

Remark

1. **Avoid** using evangelical jargon: words and expressions common among evangelicals, especially if the group includes people who do not share the same faith.
2. **Begin and end** at the stipulated time. It is important that everyone participates in all stages of the IBS.
3. **The timing** of the steps of the IBS can be adapted according to your context. This is only a suggestion.



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