

Traditionally, Christians "give up" or "fast" from their favorite food as a sign of a sacrifice. A common practice is to give to the needy - usually the amount of money that you would spend on the food from which you are fasting - as an act of justice. For the purposes of this journey, when there is an urge to indulge in the specific food that you have given up for 40 days, this is a time to focus on what it means for your neighbor to be food insecure - a neighbor who does not have the luxury of fasting.

This Lenten Resource follows the book, ***Scrimpin' and Scrapin': The Hardship and Hustle of Women and Food Insecurity in Texas Through a Womanist Lens***. This guide is expanded with lectionary passages, Farm Bill insight, spotlighting women in agriculture, and activities for readers to engage in and complete during this fasting season.



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Lenten Resource Guide for

Scrimpin' and Scrapin': *The Hardships and Hustle of Women and Food Insecurity in Texas*

Through a Womanist Theological Lens

Rev. Dr. Yvette R. Blair-Lavallais

Scrimpin' and Scrapin': The Hardships and Hustle of Women and Food Insecurity in Texas: A Lenten Resource Guide

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Published by Arpege Circle Books, Dallas, Texas, in partnership with Transform Network.

ISBN: 13: 979-8-9860528-1-6

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First Sunday

Lent Passage: Matthew 4:2 YEAR A

Food Insecurity Reflection Passage:
Psalm 24: 1 CEB

*"The earth is the Lord's and everything in it,
the world and its inhabitants too."*

Jesus fasted. For forty days and nights. We see it in Matthew's and Luke's gospel account. Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit, and he was led into his wilderness experience *by* the Spirit.

There was some intentionality in these forty days. Jesus knew the season that he was entering and the purpose for it. We know that Jesus was without food. He ate nothing during those forty days and forty nights. In Matthew 4:2, the verse ends with "...he was hungry." The Greek word

here is **epeinasen**. It means *became hungry, needy and earnestly desiring food and nutrition*.

That was Jesus' condition and real-lived experience. Pause and think about that. Jesus became hungry and the devil knew it and tried to capitalize on it. The devil tried to tempt Jesus but was unsuccessful in persuading Jesus to engage in activities that are antithetical to the gospel.

In Chapter One of *Scrimpin' and Scrapin'*, we learn what it means to hustle – that is – to look for resources that will make up the deficit for what our food-insecure neighbors are experiencing. We also read about socially acceptable and unacceptable ways that people are tempted with, just to get food, because of their social condition and real-lived experiences. Some people and some systems try to take advantage of a person's hardships.

There is not a shortage of food in the earth; rather, an access problem that leads to disparities and vulnerabilities. Everything belongs to God, yet that is not apparent in the complexities of our foodways system – how food is grown, farmed, produced, processed, and how it gets to the stores, restaurants, and ultimately to your kitchen table. There are many power dynamics at play.

Write:

As a person of faith, how do you reconcile what Psalm 24:1 (reflection passage) says against this backdrop of people experiencing a deficit in their food supply and being tempted with engaging in socially unacceptable ways? Since the earth is the Lord's and everything in it, how does your faith impact your response when you hear that fresh, healthy affordable food is denied to the most vulnerable among us?

Reflect:

In the subheading "*Who Are the Poor Among Us?*" in Chapter One, we learn what God says about the poor. Re-read this section and reflect on the barriers and the determinants in our broken social systems. What resonates with you?

Pray:

God, because the earth is yours and everything in it, then it means that no one should be food insecure. God, remind the ones who hold power that what they are holding belongs to you. Remind me that what I have belongs to you. Help me to have courageous conversations that bring solutions to ending food insecurity in my community. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Act:

The minimum wage in some states is as low as \$7.25 an hour. Food workers who rely on tips make as low as \$2.35 an hour. Re-read "Women Are the Breadwinners and Still Struggling" in Chapter One and keep in mind the gap inequity in wages.

Research the minimum wage for your state. What is the amount? How long has it been this minimum?

Let's look at the numbers. If a person works 40 hours a week at the minimum wage in *your state*, how much is that person earning? Realistically, if that person is responsible for rent, utilities, medical bills and food, what economic hardship might this neighbor be experiencing?

Final Thoughts:

From **Chapter One** of the book:

What did the 2021 Duke Sanford World Food Policy Center say about women and food insecurity?

What are some ways that debt can be canceled and who should be considered?

How much did you spend on your last grocery shopping visit? Did you have enough for what you needed to purchase?

More Resource: Listen to "Providenza Rocco of Farm to Families" episode of the *Food and Justice with Brenda Sanders* Podcast.

Notes: