



Living on a Dollar a Day

Objective:

To understand the magnitude of their wealth, participants will learn about the unequal distribution of wealth and the countries in which people live on less than a dollar a day.

Set up and Materials:

- Pictures of items that cost a dollar (or the items themselves)
- Paper and pencils
- World map that shows the average income in each region (optional)

Activity Instructions:

Invite participants to think about the value of a dollar. Here are some suggestions:

- Show participants items that cost a dollar **OR** have them generate a list of items themselves.
- Show a McDonald’s commercial or a fast-food menu. Have participants guess how many fast-food items you can buy with a dollar.
- Ask: If you found a dollar on the street today, what would you do with it?
- Ask: If you could change one thing to cost only a dollar, what would you choose?

Discuss with participants that over 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day. Convey the magnitude of 1.2 billion people with these facts:

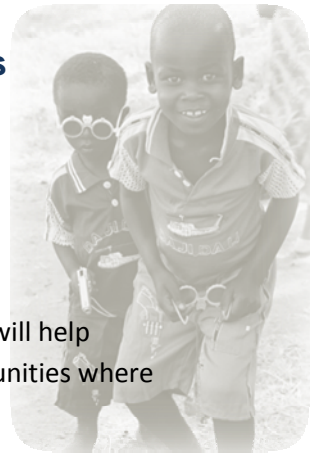
- The 2007 estimate of the United States population is roughly 302 million.
- 1.2 billion is one-sixth of the world’s population. It is more people than the population of North America!
- More information can be found on these websites:
<http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/information/population/>
<http://www.census.gov/population/www/popclockus.html>

Break into small groups and give each group paper and pencils. Have groups list things that everyone needs to survive. (e.g. money for rent and debts; clothes for school, work and play; utilities and water; school fees and supplies; health care; transportation—car, bus, insurance, gas).

- Ask: You can’t pay for all of these on one dollar a day. What would you choose to do without?
- Ask participants to rank items from most to least important, then share with the group their rationale. Talk about what it would like to live on less than one dollar a day. Challenge the

participants to put aside one dollar a day for the next month to donate to Outreach International.

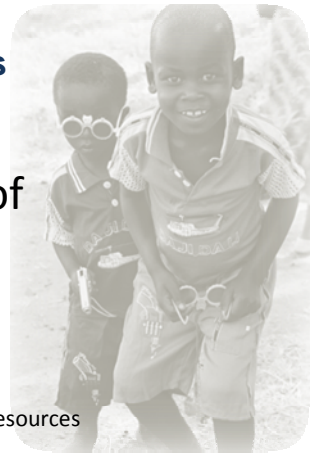
Tie into Hunger Challenge: The money that you raise by participating in Hunger Challenge will help people living on less than one dollar a day. Every dollar will make a difference in the communities where Outreach International works.



Try this!

Have a younger group? Create a store and give participants “money” to buy things with.

In small groups, they may make up shopping lists and then send a representative to the store to buy necessities. Price items so that it is difficult or impossible to buy everything they need for a day with only a dollar. The game should last several “days” so that everyone in the group is challenged by shopping with less money than they need to survive.



Map of world poverty by country, showing percentage of population living on less than 1 dollar per day.

Feel free to make copies of this map.

Data source: World Resources Institute. 2006. Available at <http://earthtrends.wri.org>. Washington DC: World Resources Institute. Meny "Economics, Business, and the Environment", submeny "Searchable Database".

