

# Starting a Local Church Food Pantry

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## I. THE BIBLICAL MANDATE

God's Commandments to feed and clothe the poor and needy and to take care of the widows and Fatherless.

Psalms 82:3

*“Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy.”*

Proverbs 19:17

*“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.”*

James 2:15, 16

*“If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”*

1 John 3:17

*“But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?”*

## II. THE URGENT NEED

### A. Facts About Needy Children and Families

1. The average age of a homeless person in America is nine.
2. Children and families make up the fastest growing segment of the homeless population.
3. The typical homeless family is a single, 20-year-old mother with two children under the age of six.
4. Over one third of homeless families have an open case for child abuse or neglect; one out of five have lost at least one child to foster care.
5. Nearly half of homeless children either have witnessed or have been subjected to violence in their home.
6. Over half of all homeless children never have lived in their own home. Over forty percent have been homeless more than once.

### B. The Need is Great...

- Today's population is made up of 613 million children under the age of 5; 1.7 billion children & adolescents between the ages 5-19.

- By the year 2000, half of the global population will be children, 2 billion of who will live in extreme poverty and/or in high-risk situations.
- Hunger and malnutrition contribute to over half of *all* children's deaths worldwide.
- There are 200 million children in the world under the age of 5 that are starving.
- 35,000 children under the age of 5 are dying every day from hunger & disease.
- 13,600 children die *every day* because of a combination of the effects of malnutrition & disease. 12 million children die every year from hunger or diseases related to hunger. That's 23 children *every minute*.
- It is estimated that every \$200 spent on child survival saves a child's life.
- It would cost \$34 billion a year to meet the needs of the world's children. This is less than what the U.S. government will spend this year on military technology development.
- By the year 2025, there will be 5 million deaths among children under the age of five, 97% of them living in the developing world & most of them due to infectious diseases such as pneumonia & diarrhea, combined with malnutrition.
- One of the biggest 21st century hazards to children will be the continuing spread of HIV/AIDS. In 1997, 590,000 children under the age of 15 became infected with HIV.
- The disease could reverse some of the major gains in child health in the last 50 years.
- Aids causes more than 115,000 children to become orphans.
- An estimated 1 million children are HIV positive in sub-Saharan Africa.
- There are nearly 8 million African children orphaned by the disease.
- By the year 2000, aids will have caused 9 million African children to become orphans.
- 7,000 American children are abandoned annually in the USA.
- There are 12 million known hungry children in the U.S. today.
- There are 100 million street children in the world today and by the year 2000, there will be 800 million.
- The United Nations estimates that 1 billion children enter the trade of child prostitution *each year*.
- The UN says that by the year 2000, the street children situation will be one of the worst crises facing the nations of the world.
- Venezuela & Colombia have thousands of children abandoned per year.

### III. GETTING STARTED

Breaking it down into bite size pieces

A. Who do we help?

1. Widows
2. Fatherless
3. Aged
4. Unemployed
5. Working poor

B. How do I find them?

1. Look inside the church family
2. Ask church members for referrals
3. Ask nearby smaller churches in low-income areas
4. Ask nearby community and local government agencies

C. How often do I help them?

It is best to target these specific groups and provide them a box of food the third weekend of every month

D. Why?

These five groups of people are usually paid monthly and the last week is extremely difficult, especially 5 week months.

E. Where do I get the food?

1. A local church food drive (see guidelines 6B)
2. Second Harvest Food Bank (see guidelines 7B)
3. Contacting local grocery stores and food distribution centers