

# What does it feel like to be hungry?

## **Summary:**

This activity demonstrates that food is not distributed equally. Students will discuss their feelings about inequality, the myths surrounding hunger and the gap between the rich and poor.

**Time:** 30 to 40 minutes

**Age:** Elementary school to adult

## **Materials:**

- A box of cheerios
- 25 small paper bags (Adjust the number of bags based on group size)

## **Preparation:**

1. Gather materials
2. Distribute cheerios into bags:
3. Eight bags- empty
4. Eight bags- 5 cheerios
5. Eight bags- 10 cheerios
6. One bag- 50 cheerios

**Group Size:** 15-30

## **Procedure:**

1. Tell the students they will receive a snack.
2. Give each student a closed bag. Tell the students to open their bags after everyone has received one.
3. After students open their bag, ask them questions about what happened. Why didn't they all get the same amount of Cheerios? Tell students they have a few minutes to work out a fairer distribution system. Encourage them to share the snack as a group. Praise them for their efforts. (NOTE: be prepared for difficulties. Some students may be unwilling to share. If this occurs, explain how this situation shows how hard it is for people to work together and share resources.)
4. Tell the group that food and wealth aren't always distributed equally. Ask students how they felt after receiving either a small or large snack. Tell them that the activity was designed to help them understand that in many countries, including the U.S., food is not distributed equally.

## **Discussion Questions:**

1. How did you feel when you realized that food had not been distributed equally?
2. Why did this happen?
3. Did anyone want to take someone else's food during the lesson?
4. Did you know about these inequalities?
5. Are there hungry people where you live?
6. Consider this common myth: People are hungry because they are too lazy to work. Explain that many people who are hungry are working, going to school, or looking for work. They just don't make enough to make ends meet, especially if they have a family to feed.