

**STUDENTS BOOK**

**Why Share the Benefit?**

Share the Benefit gives us the opportunity to investigate and reflect on what the Bible has to say about reaching out to our neighbours in need.

As part of this, there is the opportunity to have a go at living for one week on a Newstart Benefit allowance for food and drink. By doing this, participants can share in a small but powerful way the restrictions experienced by many people living in poverty.

**What to Expect?**

The Share the Benefit programme runs over several lessons/sessions.

After the first session you’ll be asked to keep a food and drink diary for a typical week. Then with some help from whoever does the shopping at your place, to work out your normal weekly food budget. From then, it’s time to calculate what you’d have available to spend on food if you and your family had to rely on the Newstart allowance.

At the next session your group/class will share their thoughts and expectations and then, in the following week, will be invited to ‘live on the Benefit’ for a seven-day period. The session following this provides an opportunity to share your experience and talk about ways to respond to need in the local community.

The emphasis throughout the programme is on how the Christian faith can inspire us to live a life of love, care and generosity in response to God’s love, care and generosity. In each session there will be a chance to look at the Bible and get involved in discussion, alongside some preparation, reflection and activity in your own time.

*NB We recommend a student friendly/plain language version of the Bible such as the Contemporary English Version.*

**Program Outline:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Topic** | **Share the Benefit (STB) Activity** |
| Week 1 | Being a good neighbour | * Keep a food and drink diary * Estimate the total value of your weekly shop |
| Week 2 | Seeing the Other | * Review your existing weekly food budget * Compare this to your Newstart allowance for week 4 |
| Week 3 | Being thankful | * Create menus for week 4 |
| Week 4 | Belonging to a community that cares | * Live on the Benefit for seven days * Share your experience with others * Donate the difference to Anglicare WA * Consider how to respond to need in the local community |



**THERE ARE TWO WAYS TO SHARE THE BENEFIT**

1. Share the experience with your family; or
2. Do this exercise on your own.
3. **If you do STB with your family you are living on the Newstart Benefit**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Your Newstart Allowance**  **Participant Category** | **STB Newstart Allowance\*** |
| Individual (Adult 17 years+) | $66.57 |
| Couple with no children | $82.90 |
| Single parent with 1 or 2 children | $110.80 |
| Single parent with 3 or more children | $147.30 |
| Couple with 1 or 2 children | $108.57 |
| Couple with 3 or more children | $156.72 |

*\*This allowance has been calculated based on what would reasonably be left over for food after other expenses such as rent, transport and power have been covered.*

**Surviving a week on the benefit**

* Tap water and any dietary needs (which may be medically required) are not included in the STB calculations.
* During the STB experience week participants should not use any produce from their own garden or use food or drink stored in the pantry. Everything needed must be bought with the amount of money allocated for the week.

1. **If you do STB on your own you have the Youth Allowance**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Individual Youth Allowance  (under 18 years) | $52.40 |

*\*This amount has been calculated based on what would reasonably be left over for food and drinks after other expenses such as rent, transport, utilities and household expenses have been paid for.*

**How to Share the Benefit**

* Keep a diary which accurately records your usual expenses for both food and drink over a week.
* Plan a menu/shopping list and then live for seven days on the STB Newstart food and drink allowance.
* If you are able, donate the difference in spending to Anglicare WA.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Usual weekly food spend | $ |
| Less my Share the Benefit food and drink allowance | $ |
| Share the Benefit donation to Anglicare WA | $ |
| Other donation amount | $ |
| Total tax-deductible donation | $ |

# There are a number of easy ways to donate the difference

        **Through everydayhero:**Your school may have set up an everydayhero page for Share The Benefit donations. If so, you just need to click on the everydayhero link that your teacher will send to you and you can donate the difference directly through the link.

         **Through our website:**[www.anglicarewa.org.au](http://www.anglicarewa.org.au/)/donate

         **By direct deposit:**Bank: NAB

     Account Name: Anglicare WA

     BSB: 086 366

     Account Number: 731124824

     Reference: STB [your name]

         **By phone:**  Call(08) 9263 2091 and pay by Visa, Mastercard or American Express.



**WEEK 1**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Being a good neighbour**

““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: “You shall love your neighbour as yourself.””(Mtt 22:37-39, NRSV)

Jesus made “love for neighbours” a special focus in his teaching and ministry. He taught that love for others is a crucial part of true faith/religion. He also taught that love (care) comes from what we see as important in our own lives.

* Make a list of the things that are important to you in your life. It could be anything!
* What are the ‘needs’ on your list?
* Is there anything you might consider more ‘wants’ than ‘needs’? Discuss your reasons.

**Who are our neighbours?**

# Read Luke 10:25-37 (individually, as a class, or by another method such as the one below).

# One way to read a Bible passage carefully is by using a technique called “Lectio Divina”. It works well to be in small groups to do it this way:

# Read the passage through once. Making no comment at the end, just reflect.

# Another person reads it a second time. Each group member shares one word or phrase that interests them or that they would like to explore. (What stands out?)

# Then another reads the passage a third time. Briefly discuss those words and phrases that were highlighted by the group. (Are there any themes, ideas etc that come out?)

# Consider the following questions:

(Note: When Jesus told this story it was usual that Samaritans and Jews despised each other and would have actively avoided any contact).

1. “Neighbours notice needs.” Why is this statement only the start of what it means to be a good neighbour? What need does the Good Samaritan meet that makes him a neighbour? What things might have been difficult for him in assisting the wounded man?
2. What does Jesus identify as the central characteristic of a neighbour? What is unique about this attitude? Discuss examples where you or others have shown this characteristic. Is there a situation where you could be a good neighbour to someone you know?

**Going deeper**

1. What more could have been done in this situation? Sometimes meeting the immediate need is only the first step. What if the Samaritan and other regular travelers on the road to Jericho worked to make the road safer, to create better opportunities for those who became bandits, lobbied for a secure hostel along the road ……? Is that also part of being neighborly?

One wonders what would happen if the Good Samaritan travelled down the same road, day after day, and continued to find helpless victims at or near the same location. What then would be his response? At what point would the Samaritan do more than offer short-term aid for the victims? Would he start asking deeper questions about the social location? Would he seek solutions for long-term change? One can assume that, if such a scenario took place, the Samaritan would not only seek to meet the immediate needs of those harmed, but he would also advocate for policies that provide for a better future. Wouldn’t the Good Samaritan would show love for his neighbor not only through momentary acts of charity, but also through sustained advocacy for the promotion of a common good?

([Brian Konkol](http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithforward/2013/07/when-robbers-and-innkeepers-profit-from-good-samaritans/), “When Robbers and Innkeepers profit from Samaritans.”)

# Beyond noticing

1. Discuss what stops us from knowing about the needs of others.
2. What would you expect to be the needs of people in our city who are living below the poverty line?
3. Consider the story below. What things might you / Anglicare WA do to be a neighbour to this family?

*Ben tried to keep his family situation a secret from his friends and teachers. Since Dad lost his job they struggled to pay all the bills and there wasn’t as much food in the house as there used to be. Ben’s mum tried hard to hide their struggles and kept working at her part-time job but sometimes he would find her crying in the kitchen. She had always been a great cook but now dinner was often something from a can or packet. Ben’s parents didn’t usually eat dinner with their three boys now – sometimes they didn’t eat at all. Ben noticed that Mum and Dad seemed to be arguing a lot more lately – he hated to hear it at night. They wouldn’t let them have friends over after school either because they were embarrassed that they couldn’t offer afternoon tea.*

# Share the Benefit insights

How much do we worry about our weekly shopping budget?

How much of your social life involves eating or drinking with others?

# Prayer focus: Sustainable Living

Anglicare WA is committed to helping struggling families and individuals stay on their feet until their situation improves.

Services include emergency relief (providing information, advocacy and material assistance for people in financial crisis), financial counselling and NILS (No Interest Loans Scheme).

# Pray:

* That those who turn to Anglicare WA for assistance will find the help and support they need.
* That Anglicare WA’s financial services will enable individuals and families facing economic crisis to find renewed hope.

# Activity:

* Keep a food and drink diary for the week. (See the diary below).
* Estimate the total value of your weekly shop.

**SHARE THE BENEFIT FOOD AND DRINK DIARY**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Monday** | **Tuesday** | **Wednesday** | **Thursday** | **Friday** | **Saturday** | **Sunday** |
| **BREAKFAST** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| What did you eat and drink? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Estimated cost of ingredients |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **LUNCH** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| What did you eat and drink? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Estimated cost of ingredients |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DINNER** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| What did you eat and drink? |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Estimated cost of ingredients |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **COMMENT**  **FOR THE DAY** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other items (eaten / drunk today between meals) and their cost |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **TOTAL**  Estimated cost of all of today’s food and drink (rough guide only) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |



**WEEK 2**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Seeing the Other**

First impressions can be misleading.

* Think of a time when your first impressions of a person or a situation were wrong. Share with the group. What caused your opinion to change?
* What sorts of things give us our ‘first impressions’ of another?
* What can we do or look out for to get a better/truer understanding about them?
* What challenges are there in appreciating/understanding the character or the situation of others?

**Looking Beyond First Impressions**

# Read Luke 19:1-10

# Why not take time to read this text carefully and with a Lectio Divina attitude?

# Read the passage through once. Making no comment at the end, just reflect.

# Another person reads it a second time. Each group member shares one word or phrase that interests them or that they would like to explore. (What stands out?)

# Then another reads the passage a third time. Briefly discuss those words and phrases that were highlighted by the group. (Are there any themes, ideas etc that come out?)

**Consider the following questions:**

(Note: In the Bible, Tax Collectors were held to be greedy, sinful and were unwelcome in a community. They also represented the Roman occupiers and so were considered traitors).

1. Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was. What might he have heard about Jesus that made him so eager to catch a glimpse of him? Consider briefly some of the other stories about Jesus that Luke has mentioned from Chapters 1-18.
2. What was the impression that people had about Zacchaeus? Why might this first impression have been wrong?
3. What does Jesus do to challenge the ‘first impression stage’? How can we appreciate both the character and situation of others? Discuss how the example of Jesus might guide us in appreciating the character or situation of others.
4. What does Zacchaeus learn about Jesus? What impact does it make on him? Do you think Zacchaeus’ reaction was unusual?

**Beyond first impressions**

1. Make a list of reasons people might find themselves on Newstart. How likely do you think it is that you might experience any or all of these difficulties? Discuss.
2. Consider the story below. What feelings do people experience when they are on Newstart? How might this new appreciation assist us/ Anglicare WA as we support people who live on Newstart?

*As a sole parent, Greg’s first priority was his children. His former partner had a serious drug habit which had made their early lives very difficult. When Greg was granted custody he left work to care for them and had to rely on government Benefits. He quickly found that just covering the bills was a struggle and there was little money for anything else. Greg started to doubt his abilities as a father when he saw his children missing out. It hurt that he could not provide his children with what others had. He felt that he should be able to provide for his own family without having to resort to outside help.*

# Share the Benefit insights

What have you noticed about yourself as you keep your food diary? What first impressions would others have if all they knew of you was this food diary?

If you had to reduce a couple of items from your food diary, which two would you find easiest to give up? Which two would you never give up?

What is the difference between your needs and wants?

# Prayer focus: Family Services

Anglicare WA provides a wide range of programs to support vulnerable and disadvantaged families with children who are in need of physical, social, financial, emotional and spiritual support.

# Pray:

* For the families who seek support to change their life circumstances and for the Anglicare WA staff who stand beside them.
* For wisdom and compassion for family workers as they meet with families who are doing it tough.
* For insight to enable these workers to minister to the needs of vulnerable families.

# Activity:

* Review your existing weekly food budget
* Compare this to your Newstart allowance for week 4 (see page 3)



**WEEK 3**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Being Thankful**

# Into thankfulness

Consider this story of a person who has been helped by Anglicare WA. Consider the difficult situation that they were in and the relief they experienced after being helped. Note the words they use to describe their feelings.

*Marie and her two pre-school children were homeless and had nowhere to stay that night. They had been living with Marie’s mother after escaping domestic violence but were forced to leave due to the mother’s mental health issues.*

*Anglicare WA was able to secure emergency motel accommodation and provided food vouchers to assist Marie as she stayed at the motel with her children over the Easter long weekend.*

*Once Marie was able to find rental accommodation Anglicare WA provided financial assistance for advance rent and household essentials. Marie reported that she could not believe the support and generosity shown to her and her family, giving them a second chance when she was so desperate and didn’t know where to turn.*

# Out of thankfulness

A core attitude of the Christian faith is thankfulness.

# Read Luke 23:32-43

# *You could use the Lectio Divina method again if desired:*

# Read the passage through once. Making no comment at the end, just reflect.

# Another person reads it a second time. Each group member shares one word or phrase that interests them or that they would like to explore.

# Then another reads the passage a third time. Briefly discuss those words and phrases that were highlighted by the group.

# Consider these questions

1. In this passage Jesus speaks two sentences.

*34Then Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.’*

*43Jesus replied, ‘Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.’*

* 1. Discuss what is happening/who Jesus is speaking to for each sentence.
  2. Do you think the people Jesus spoke to deserved what he said to them/asked of God? Why or why not?
  3. How do you think they would have felt on hearing such words from Jesus?

1. Forgiveness and redemption (being saved from sin) are two really important themes we find in this passage. They are both central to Jesus’ teaching. They were made possible through his death and resurrection.

Read Ephesians 2:4-10 and reconsider Jesus’ words in Luke 23:34 & 43.

* 1. Do you think you/we deserve this sort of gift/grace from God? Why/why not?
  2. How do you feel, when you hear of God’s kindness and mercy towards people?

1. Christians know how much God loves them and this motivates and compels them to love others (see 1 John 4:7-11). This love is inspired by thankfulness, especially for the forgiveness and hope of heaven we have because of Jesus. You can read more about this in Romans 5:6 and 1 John 2:1-2.

How might all this love and thankfulness motivate us to love our neighbour?

# Share the Benefit insights

Discuss and decide both the menu and the restrictions/challenges that you will experience in the next week. In what ways can we be thankful that we can participate in Share the Benefit?

# Prayer focus: Anglicare’s supporters

It is through Anglicare WA’s supporters that we can reach out in loving service to many vulnerable Western Australians. For this we give thanks.

# Pray:

* Give thanks for the love of God.
* Think of those whom we struggle to love. Pray that the love of God in Christ might shape our love for them.
* Give thanks for Anglicare WA’s faithful supporters.

# Activity:

Use the details from your food diary to determine your normal weekly food and drink outlay:

* Normal weekly food and drink spending/cost ……………………………
* My Anglicare WA Newstart food and drink allowance ……………………………
* What is the difference? …………………………….

Based on your Newstart budget allowance (see page 3) create your menus for week 4.



**WEEK 4**

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

**Belonging to a Community that Cares**

What makes a good community? Draw up a list and think about what you appreciate or would hope to see in a good community. (e.g. looking out for each other etc)

Who is responsible for these things?

# The model Christian community

**Read Acts 2:42-47** *(using Lectio Divina if you wish)*

# Read the passage through once. Making no comment at the end, just reflect.

# Another person reads it a second time. Each group member shares one word or phrase that interests them or that they would like to explore.

# Then another reads the passage a third time. Briefly discuss those words and phrases that were highlighted by the group.

**Discuss the following questions:**

1. *A community with a common story.*

What sorts of things did the Apostles teach? Read Acts 1:21-22 and recall a few things they might have seen or heard.

1. *A community with common activities.*

Read Acts 2:42. How do you think these activities would have worked/happened back when this passage was written? How do they happen in churches today?

1. *A community that cares.*

Read Acts 2:44-45. How do you think this might have worked out practically in the early church? How might the principle of these things be worked out in our community? In our local area?

1. Read Acts 2:47. What kind of impact do you think the early church had on the society of their day? Why did people like them so much?

# Extending community

What impact does the community life of your school have on your local area? Think of some examples. (e.g. family fun days, playgroups, service learning programmes)

Consider this account of how schools can partner with Anglicare WA bringing support to those in need. Brainstorm about the sort of partnership your local community might be able to have with Anglicare WA. If you want to explore more, contact Anglicare WA’s Schools and Faith Officer (9263 2066 or [kelly.keall@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:kelly.keall@anglicarewa.org.au)).

**Here is one story about a school in collaboration with Anglicare WA:**

*Year 9 students at an independent girls’ high school in Perth contacted one of Anglicare WA’s services that supports young parents. The students were reaching out because they wanted to make a difference in a meaningful way in their community.*

*They consulted with staff at Anglicare WA to see if their idea was something that would be of value to the young parents that they were currently working with. Their idea was to create a ‘pamper day’ for the parents. A day where the parents could relax and be looked after for a change.*

*The students had lots of ideas for the day and by speaking with the support workers from Anglicare WA, they were able to make sure that the ideas that they had were going to be of value and appropriate for the young parents. This consultation process was a very respectful way of planning the day. Rather than just rushing ahead with their project, they wanted to make sure that their ideas were of value to the parents.*

*The day was a huge success. Anglicare WA staff members transported the young Mums, Dads and their children to the school on the appointed day. They were greeted by a group of welcoming girls who made them feel at home. They treated the parents to a delicious morning tea, massages, a yoga class for parents and bubs, a fun photo booth and lots of craft and play activities for the children. The parents had fun and relaxed while their children were occupied with fun activities run by the students. At the end of the day, the parents were presented with a beautiful gift of a bundle of children’s books and treats.*

*The students and the parents all enjoyed the day. It created a lovely connection between the two groups and is a simple example of school students reaching out to their local community to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others.*

**Share the Benefit insights**

* What have you learned by participating in “Share the Benefit”? Make a list!
* Will you make any lifestyle changes following this experience? If so, what?
* Might your Share the Benefit experience challenge/change your social habits? How? (especially think of including others/being included in activities).
* Identify one local initiative you would like to join/commit to, as you continue being a neighbour to those in need.

# Prayer focus: Parish and School Partnerships

Anglicare WA seeks to partner with churches and schools in order to bring a genuine Christ- centred approach to changing lives and growing communities. We welcome conversations around how we might offer that service to the community together with Anglicans in Western Australia. Our Church and Schools Coordinator is keen to hear from you to begin that conversation.

# Pray:

* That we can make a real difference as we reach out in loving service as the Anglican Community
* For the Spirit’s lead in understanding the many needs in our country, and in responding with wisdom and love.
* Give thanks for the community life you share.

# Activity:

* Live on the Benefit for seven days.
* Share your experience with others.
* Donate the difference to Anglicare WA.

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Original authors: Michael Palmer and Tim Matthews

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Benefit costings: Dr. Shae Garwood

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**CONTACT US**

**Church and Schools Coordinator**

Phone: (08) 9263 2066

Email: [ambassadors@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:ambassadors@anglicarewa.org.au)

Website: www.anglicarewa.org.au

**Mission Leader / Chaplain**

The Rev’d Mark McCracken

Phone: (08) 9263 2124 0403368248

Email: [mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au](mailto:mark.mccracken@anglicarewa.org.au)

Website: www.anglicarewa.org.au

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