



Climbing the Ladder of Economic Development

IN THIS ACTIVITY, the participants obtain perspective of the world's population while gaining a greater understanding of the poverty trap that the extreme poor are caught in.

TIME REQUIRED: 30 MINUTES | INTENDED FOR GRADES 6-8



mathematics



Bible studies



economics

MATERIALS NEEDED

- » Masking tape; using the tape, create a ladder on the floor, with six lines as rungs, two feet apart
- » Seven copies of Resource, “Labels and Tokens,” found on pages 93-95
- » Bibles, one for each participant
- » Visit worldvision.org/lp/acsi-teacher-resources for a video you can show to support this lesson. (optional)

1

Activity Steps

BEGIN BY SHARING THE FOLLOWING:

- » Economic development happens when a country progresses for the well-being of its people.
- » For example: Economic development occurs when someone who makes less than two dollars a day (and has not got enough food and clean water to survive) progresses to make enough money not only to survive, but also to thrive. This improves the quality of life for the family and the entire community.
- » If economic development is a ladder with higher rungs representing steps up the path to economic well-being, there are roughly 700 million people around the world, one-tenth of humanity, who are not even able to make it onto the first rung in order to start climbing. They are caught in the poverty trap—too poor, too ill, too hungry—they are fighting just to survive.
- » These are the extreme poor struggling with absolute poverty, unable to even secure life's necessities. Earnings for people occupying this rung may be \$1.90 a day, sometimes even less.

- » About 5.1 billion people who are in the middle-income world occupy the next few rungs. Their income may be a few thousand dollars a year. Many of them live in cities and are able to secure some comfortable amenities. Their children go to school, have access to medicine, and nutrition is adequate.
- » Still higher up the ladder are the remaining 1.2 billion in the high-income world. The majority of these people live in North America and Europe with an increasing number living in middle-income countries such as China, Brazil, and Mexico.
- » More than half of the world is experiencing economic progress. The greatest tragedy is that one-tenth of humanity do not even have a foot on the ladder of economic development. Even though life-saving solutions exist—whether in forms of medicines, drought-resistant seeds, or malaria bed nets—they lack the money to invest in it.

(Source: World Bank, 2017)

2

ASK FOR SEVEN VOLUNTEERS. Distribute to each volunteer one of the seven label cards from Resource on pages 93-94. Ask them to share the situation noted on their card.

3

THEN DISCUSS with the whole group where they think this individual would stand on the ladder. Have the member stand in their spot on the ladder, until all seven members are placed.

4

LASTLY, GIVE EACH VOLUNTEER his or her situational token one at a time. Ask them to read it aloud and then have the group discuss how this situation will affect the movement up or down the ladder of economic development. Tape this token onto their label card.

5

ASK THE GROUP to reflect on what they remember about the story of Sodom and Gomorrah. You may have to refresh their memories by reading Genesis 19:1-17.

6

NOW HAVE YOUR GROUP read Ezekiel 16:49-50. Then invite the participants to discuss the following questions:

- » What strikes you as you hear Sodom's sin described in Ezekiel?
- » How would you summarize Sodom's sin as expressed in Ezekiel?
- » Do you think our world is doing enough to address global poverty? What more could we do? What more could you do?

7

INTRODUCE THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS as noted below and briefly discuss why each is important.

- » At the United Nations summit held in New York City in September 2015, leaders from 193 nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals, committing to a global partnership to end extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets with a deadline of 2030.
- » These goals are summarized as follows:
 - Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere
 - Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
 - Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
 - Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning
 - Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
 - Goal 6: Ensure access to water and sanitation for all
 - Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
 - Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all
 - Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
 - Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries
 - Goal 11: Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
 - Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
 - Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
 - Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources
 - Goal 15: Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss
 - Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies
 - Goal 17: Revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development
- » How do these goals reflect God's goals for the world?

8

READ TOGETHER ISAIAH 58:6-7, then discuss the following questions:

- » What is God looking for from His people?
- » What might examples of what living out verses 6 and 7 look like locally and globally?

9

CONCLUDE YOUR TIME together in prayer.

RESOURCE

Labels and Tokens

SHANGHAI, CHINA

I am a young professional adult in Shanghai, China. I hold a university degree and now have a high-income job in the city of Shanghai. I work in a business that exports technological advances. My country has a lot of poor people, but in the last few decades, we have increased our exports. In 1980, China had \$20 billion in exports. In 2004, China went up to \$400 billion in exports. Check the label on your clothes or your CD player. It was probably made in China. This has given us opportunity for foreign investment, improved ports for shipments around the world, etc.

CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES

I work at UCLA conducting research and development for innovative technologies. My company pays for me to travel around the world, sharing our scientific knowledge with major cities in Asia and Europe. I also enjoy personal travel to some beach resorts. I grew up in the Bronx, New York. I saw poverty, but it was not extreme. I received social assistance to be able to go to university, and now I have an affluent life.

HYDERABAD, INDIA

I am an information technology (IT) worker. A poor country is an attractive place for high-technology enterprises. Coming to India, many companies save money, but also introduce our poor economy to sophisticated technology and advanced management processes. Hosting them on our turf has helped us learn from their processes and move up the ladder. I grew up in a village outside Hyderabad. In 1950, the population of India was 350 million, and now it's 1.25 billion. Many people in rural areas are still in extreme poverty, but I was able to make it to the city and get some education. I support my family, who still live in the village. My dad sells rice locally.

DHAKA, BANGLADESH

I am a factory worker in Dhaka. I walk in a long line of women who travel two hours to the city to work in a clothing factory, where our clothes are bound for stores in the USA. I grew up in the countryside. I couldn't go to school, so I never learned to read or write. Our village was poor, with no clean water, and diseases were rampant. My family wanted me to marry young and have many children. I did not want to raise my children in these conditions. As a young woman, I saw this job as an opportunity to travel to the city to work, acquiring skills and income. I hope to possibly go back to my village and start a sewing business.

RESOURCE

Labels and Tokens

(continued)

KABALA, SIERRA LEONE

I am a father of four. A decade of civil war among my people ended in 2002, but we are still recovering. I cannot work, as my arm was chopped off during the war. In 2014 our country suffered an outbreak of the deadly Ebola virus, which killed almost 4,000 people. This happened because our healthcare system was so weakened by the war—we had only 136 doctors for a population of 6 million people. Now we are trying to recover and rebuild.

AGBOVILLE, IVORY COAST

I am a 10-year-old girl. My father is a farmer who makes barely enough to survive. I have seven brothers and sisters. I do not go to school, but rather work at a cocoa plantation. Ivory Coast is the leading exporter of cocoa, mostly to the United States. Many of the workers on the plantation are children, and most are subject to dangerous working conditions. Some children are kidnapped and sold into slavery.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

I am from Haiti, a neighbor to the Dominican Republic. I have left my country for the promise of a better life. I have taken a bus to work and live at a sugarcane plantation in the D.R. The U.S. buys much of our sugar, very inexpensively. The company I work for has taken my papers—I am basically a slave in the compound. I receive small wages for harvesting. There is no clean water, no schooling for my children, no healthcare, and conditions are very poor. No one talks to us about basic human rights.

Situational Tokens

Note: these are all fictional situations—not reality.

1. CHINA: The Yellow River is drying up. There is not enough water for the people in Shanghai. Water is severely polluted from many factories.

2. USA: This worker decides he wants to use his science-based technologies in developing countries and refugee camps to help them out of the poverty trap. His ideas include such things as drought-resistant seeds; nitrogen-producing plants to replace nitrogen into depleted soils; fertilizer that produces triple yields; rocks that absorb CO².

3. INDIA: He is offered the opportunity to work at a large tech company in the United States. He decides to use his new income to help his family go to school back in India. He also decides to give money to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

RESOURCE

*Labels and
Tokens*
(continued)

4. BANGLADESH: A charitable organization begins offering microloans and business training to women. This factory worker receives a microloan and training, and starts her own sewing business back in her village.

5. SIERRA LEONE: This man's sister and brother-in-law contracted Ebola during the recent outbreak, and both died. They had three young children who are now orphans.

6. IVORY COAST: A large U.S.-based chocolate company decides to incorporate fair wages and fair conditions for their workers in their cocoa plantations and factories. Laws are put into effect banning child labor.

7. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: The D.R. is asking for all foreigners who don't have papers (like a passport) to leave the country. This worker does not know where she will go. She has no money, no land, no education, no social assistance, and no healthcare.

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HOMEWORK: *Climbing the Ladder of Economic Development*

STUDENT NAME _____

DATE _____

When you go home tonight, ask your parent or guardian to name six things that they think cause poverty and why they think so.

What were the six things they think cause poverty?

What can you do for the poor in your community? Brainstorm an idea and create a plan to share with the class.
