

TIPS FOR TALKING TO YOUR KIDS ABOUT HUNGER AND POVERTY

It's difficult to really understand these complex issues, even for adults. And while we can't shield our children from the realities facing our world, there are opportunities to help them make sense of these issues and the effect they have on others. Try some of the following suggestions to begin or continue the conversation in your family.



These photos were taken right here in our community and feature people helped by people who invest in United Way of Cass-Clay. LEFT: When Ken was homeless, he was able to stay in a shelter that was there for him thanks to people like you. Now he is in his own apartment, but pays it forward by coming back to the shelter to volunteer to serve meals. MIDDLE: This young man once lived at the homeless shelter in Moorhead, but now that he and his dad have their own home, they still come back to eat lunch at the shelter during the summer time, to help make ends meet. RIGHT: Jenae and one of her volunteers distribute meals to children during the summer time at Village West Park in Fargo. Many of these children rely on school lunches, so without these meals in the summer time, they may otherwise go hungry.

1. MAKE IT RELEVANT. Sometimes it's hard for kids to relate to people that clearly experience more challenges than they do. Concentrate on pointing out the ways we are similar to those that might look or live differently. Use concrete examples, such as stories from your family's past, or a friend who faces unique obstacles but still loves their family, has fun, wants to be a good person, etc.

2. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TEACHABLE MOMENTS. When you see an example of poverty in our community, engage your child on the topic. Conversations like these allow you to clear up misconceptions, replace inappropriate terminology, and share perspective. Talking openly and honestly about the issues and causes of poverty and hunger helps your child understand that there is no shame associated with being hungry or needing help.

3. MODEL AND ENCOURAGE EMPATHY AND ACTION. Poverty is a very real issue in our community. Help your children find compassion for others and realize their power to help. Ask leading questions, such as: "Imagine what it would be like to feel hungry a lot. What might make you feel better? How would you want someone to help?" Here's another good starter: "It's sad that some families are struggling to have enough to eat. What can we do to help our neighbors?"

4. OFFER REASSURANCE. If your child seems a little anxious or overwhelmed by these interactions, make sure to comfort them and explain how your family would handle situations in the event of crisis. Talk about a time your family or friends experienced hardship and got help to make it through.

5. SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH OTHER FAMILIES. Share your stories and experiences on social media. Post photos of how your family helps others-you never know when you will inspire others to do the same! Post on social media with #LIVEUNITEDFM, if you would like, and our United Way of Cass-Clay team will share them on our social media sites, too!

BE BOLD. LIVE UNITED. INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

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