



## WHAT is a FOOD PANTRY?



**Overview:** During this lesson, members will discuss where people get food and then help sort food to be distributed to food pantries and meal programs. In America there are many ways to obtain food. People with sufficient funds use traditional places such as grocery stores and restaurants, while people with limited incomes may have to seek help from *food pantries* and *meal programs*. This lesson looks at how pantries and meal programs help people.

### **Objectives:**

1. Members will discuss places where people can obtain food.
2. Members will discover what happens at a food pantry.
3. Members will sort donated food into categories.
4. Members will see what a food pantry looks like.

### **Materials/Resources:**

- Large poster or copies of the food sorting categories, included with this lesson.
- Food Pantry Photos- You can print some off the web to share with members or pass around the hardcopy included with the packet. A few are available at <http://www.oslcmilw.org/Portals/oslcmilw/Chipotle Food in Fellowship Hall.JPG> , [http://www.cgif.net/images/food\\_pantry-clothing\\_bank\\_004\\_b6p2.jpg](http://www.cgif.net/images/food_pantry-clothing_bank_004_b6p2.jpg)
- Poster or chart for keeping track of the number of food items collected during the food drive. (Have members create a chart with you or ask someone to volunteer)
- Donated food collected during the food drive or other supplied specifically for this lesson.

### **What is a:**

**Food Pantry:** Place where people who have no food can get a 2-3 day supply of free food to prepare at home.

**Meal Program:** A program people can visit to receive a free hot meal.

### **Procedures:**

1. Ask the club to brainstorm places where they go for food. List these ideas on the board. Possible ideas include: grocery store, restaurant (can be specific ones), cafeteria, ballpark, airplane, home, friend, hospital, church, etc. Discuss which of these places provide food for free and which of these places they have to use money to receive food. If food pantries and meal programs are not here, add them.
2. Ask the Members what they think happens at a food pantry. Explain that when people go to a food pantry they get a bag a food that will last a few days and feed all

members of their family. (Optionally, you could pack a bag of food using the chart on *Appendix A.*)

3. Show Members the photos of food pantries. What do food pantries look like? What are people doing there?

4. Introduce the food-sorting chart to members. Explain to members that these are the foods that food pantries need most. Have members help put donated food from the food drive into these categories.

5. First, discuss which of the food sorting categories have the most nutritious foods in them (such as vegetables, fruits, protein, and dairy). Then, using the food that has been donated to your food drive, talk about which of these food categories seem to have received the least amount of donations. As a club, brainstorm ways to promote these categories to others. Ideas include making posters, running a promotion, or writing announcements to encourage others to bring in certain items.

**Lesson Extension:**

- Members can also do a weekly count of the food items they have collected. These weekly totals can be recorded on a “thermometer” created by members.

- Visit a food pantry for the REAL Experience – and help out! In addition to food donation, most food pantries need help with fundraising, distribution, sorting, inspecting, & re-packing of food. Some volunteers help with mailings, data-entry, and telephone support. Food banks also hold benefit events and need volunteers to help with ticket sales, raffles, and greeting attendees. Usually food pantries and banks have age requirements and trainings to help orientate volunteers, so please be sure to check with your local pantry or bank for any requirements before planning a project.