

# ACTIVITY FOR KIDS, YOUTH, AND ALL AGES: Soup Pot Parable

**Instructions: Share the Soup Pot Parable story using one of the variations below or a creative version of your own. Reflect together on what the story teaches about God and about the work we do together through Week of Compassion.**

(Variation 1)

Read the story through once or twice. Highlight the important parts and messages of the story. Invite families or virtual groups to stage their own versions of the story—they might stage a pantomime, or turn it into a skit, or put on a puppet show. Depending on your type of gathering and technological arrangement, you might invite groups to perform their versions live or share pictures or videos.

(Variation 2)

Identify a group of 4 volunteers, who are in the same location and can act out the story as you read it aloud (or get creative about how to “stage” the scene across multiple locations).

*Volunteer #1:* a big pot for imaginary soup *Volunteer #2:* four bowls

*Volunteer #3:* four spoons *Volunteer #4:* a table or picnic blanket

## **The Story:**

There was once a place called Good Hope. Around supper time, the people of Good Hope would imagine their favorite meal with delicious flavors, and aromas. Alas, no matter how much they imagined, their plates were empty. One person had a drawer full of spoons but no bowl or soup. Another had a nice bowl, but it was empty. Finally, the third neighbor had a pot and ingredients for soup, but no spoon to stir or serve it. The neighbor with the soup sat down on his stoop and cried, “I don’t even have a spoon to stir and serve my soup. I will surely starve.” The neighbor with the spoons sat down across the street and said, “I do not have bowl nor soup to eat. I will surely starve.” Lastly, the neighbor with the bowl sat down and wept, “I have been staring at my empty bowl all day and my stomach is growling. I will surely starve.”

As the three neighbors sat with their items, with their stomachs growling, a fourth friend arrived. This friend was known all around as someone who was wise and kind. Without a word, she started collecting sticks to build a fire. When the fire was hot, she exclaimed, “Dear neighbors, you will not starve! Come sit with me by this fire, and you will see that we will all have enough to eat.”

The three neighbors came and placed their items one by one before them. The neighbor with the soup pot sat it down on the fire, and soon it was bubbling and steaming and smelling so good. The neighbor with the spoons began to stir the bubbling soup. When the soup was ready, the neighbor with the bowls set them down and they filled each one.

Then the neighbor gave one spoon to the neighbor with the pot of soup, one to the neighbor with the bowls, and kept one spoon for her/himself. The three neighbors were so excited! This soup smelled better than any meal they had ever imagined. Just as they prepared to bless their food and eat, the neighbor with the spoons said to the fourth neighbor, "Dear neighbor, come sit with us and eat."

But the fourth neighbor said, "I do not have a pot of soup; I do not have any bowls; and I do not have any spoons. I do not have anything to contribute to this wonderful meal." The friends disagreed and one said, "Oh, but you brought the greatest ingredient of all. You taught us the importance of sharing with our neighbors." Another friend said, "You brought us together around this fire. We have one more spoon, so you must join us to make the meal complete." The fourth neighbor joined the others and together, one and all, they shared a meal.

**Processing:**

What were the important ingredients to make the meal complete? Were there important "ingredients" other than food and dishes? Where do you see God at work in the story? Where in our lives could we practice sharing like we saw in this story?

(If you did variation 1): Reflect on the unique ways the "casts" told the story. If they made interesting artistic choices, talk about them!

Remind the group that sometimes people experience homelessness, hunger, or inadequate clothing or shelter. Sometimes it is because of disasters like floods or tornadoes, sometimes because their jobs do not pay enough or their crops are not growing, and sometimes because they have to leave their homes because of war or violence. Right now, many people are hungry because of the disease COVID-19, which has caused many people to lose their jobs and is making it harder to get food to where it needs to go.

The Week of Compassion Offering helps us to make space at the table for our neighbors and teach us how to share the resources we are able to give. Even if our offering appears small, it may make a big difference when combined with the gifts of others. Week of Compassion is working with people all around the world to make sure people have enough to eat through the pandemic (if you have time, share some of the featured stories found at [weekofcompassion.org/covid19response](https://weekofcompassion.org/covid19response)). When we give to Week of Compassion, we welcome others to the table, and we are also welcoming God to the table to share in our meal with us.