







# Exploring the Roots

## Introduction

In this learning expedition, students will explore God's love and the importance of loving our neighbors, engage with World Vision's understanding of poverty as the result of broken relationships, and help students see the spiritual, social, material, and mental root causes of poverty.

Foundational to Ignite, at all stages of learning, is understanding the Greatest Commandments; God's love for them and responding in love to their neighbor. All students can participate regardless of age, achievement, or ability.

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these commandments of love. They hold the key to a transformed world; thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Empowering students to deeply know God's love and act upon it leads them into the pursuit of a world transformed in right relationship.

It's an honor, as educators and adults, to help kids reach their full potential of a productive and fulfilling life; not separated from the story of God but deeply a part.

We hope that God will ignite the hearts of your students, the future leaders of the world; that they may experience their defining moments of transformation and act and re-write stories of injustice to justice, sorrow to joy, and brokenness to restoration.

## This Expedition

*This Learning Expedition centers around three things:*

### The Driving Question

What's behind all this?

### The Deep Hope

That by curiously exploring the root causes of poverty, we would live out healthy, healing relationships with God and our neighbors.

### The Expedition Verse

*"And I am praying that you will put into action the generosity that comes from your faith as you understand and experience all the good things we have in Christ. Your love has given me much joy and comfort, my brother, for your kindness has often refreshed the hearts of God's people."*

—Philemon 1:6-7



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## Planning Ahead

- **Learning Plans 1-6:** provide background knowledge and can be considered a base for the rest of the expedition. They introduce the deep hope of this expedition, explore God's love and the importance of loving our neighbors, engage with World Vision's understanding of poverty as fundamentally broken relationships, and help students see the spiritual, social, material, and mental root causes of poverty.
- **Learning Plans 7-9:** allow students to begin using the knowledge base they've built up. They'll explore case studies (in the United States and in connection with their World Vision sponsored child) to unpack best practices as well as areas where harm can be done, despite our best intentions. At the conclusion of this stage, students will be confident with core ideas and able to proceed thoughtfully through what's next.
- **Learning Plans 10-15:** lead into the community engagement project. Students will choose a poverty-related topic in your local community, investigate it, partner with and learn from a local group or organization doing work in that area, and then analyze and advocate in light of everything they've learned up until that point. The goal of the project is for students to be able to analyze problems, determine root causes, and advocate for work that addresses these issues.

## Overview of Grade 8 Learning Plans

1. Entering the Story
2. God and Our Neighbors
3. The Spiritual Roots of Poverty
4. The Material Roots of Poverty
5. The Mental Roots of Poverty
6. The Social Roots of Poverty
7. Loving My Neighbor by Exploring the Roots
8. The Material Roots of Poverty
9. When Helping Hurts
10. Engaging with Our Community
11. Researching Root Causes in Our Community
12. Interviewing a Local Expert
13. Analyzing Our Findings
14. Communicating and Advocating
15. Celebration of Learning



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## Practical Considerations

Each learning plan contains step-by-step instructions that can help you to lead students through this expedition with minimal preparation, but there are some practical considerations to be mindful of:

- The primary texts used in building this curriculum were *When Helping Hurts* by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (2012 edition) and *Walking with the Poor* by Bryant L. Myers (2011 edition). Reading both texts (*When Helping Hurts*, in particular) will allow you to fully understand and inhabit the ideas you'll be exploring.
  1. Many of the learning plans require you to distribute and read photocopied pages from *When Helping Hurts*, so be prepared for that. The page numbers referenced on those learning plans are taken from the 2012 version of the book.
- As you proceed through the learning plans, you will develop a classroom "document panel" bulletin board that will eventually map the story of your learning journey.
  1. You are strongly encouraged to take photographs of your students at work during key moments, and to then post those to your document panel.
  2. Your document panel must prominently feature the driving question, deep hope, and foundational scripture passage. Those will be referenced again and again, and it will be helpful to you to have them posted in the classroom.
- The community engagement project that starts in learning plan 10 will involve inviting in representatives or leaders from a local program or organization that is working to alleviate a problem that your students will choose to focus on. You will need to come alongside your students in these efforts, and it would be helpful for you to do a little early digging into which local organizations, churches, and non-profits are operating in your community, just to help them through the first steps.
- One idea is to order small notebooks (or "field journals") for students to use for their written reflections and their notes on the learning expedition. Students will have many opportunities for reflective work and having a single, compiled document might prove meaningful for many students.
- This expedition does not have any major technology needs, but the learning plans were written with the assumption that some sort of presentation screen is available, and that students will have devices or computers available.
- Many learning plans require you to distribute handouts, photocopies, or images, or project quotes or images on the screen. Be sure to read through the lessons far enough in advance to have those prepared.

Finally, as the classroom teacher, you are the one who best knows the needs of your students and local community, so you are free to modify and adapt these learning plans, as needed, to meet the practical situation in front of you. However, be advised that the learning plans were carefully designed to build on each other, so changing or eliminating one thing early on may have ripple effects later in the expedition.

May God bless you on your journey with this work!