

Living Faithfully in an **Unequal** World

**Extreme
Poverty**
Group Guide



TEARA AUSTRALIA

forTomorrow.org.au



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Welcome

Why this topic?

We live in the 'now but not yet' of God's Kingdom. We live with the belief that the healing and justice of Christ has broken into our world, yet we witness the ever-present reality of extreme poverty, greed and violence all around us. We live with the understanding that we need to seek tomorrow, by acting today.

As Christians, we believe we are called to respond to the extreme poverty and injustice we see all around us. We are called to act justly, to love mercy and walk humbly with our God – and at TEAR our hope is that we begin to respond to this challenge in five key ways: to pray, to learn, to give, to advocate and to live out our daily lives in a way that demonstrates our love for our global neighbours.

We know that poverty has a disproportionate impact on women and girls. We know that women make up around 70% of the world's poor. They do more than two-thirds of the world's work, yet earn less than 10% of the world's wages. Women living in extreme poverty face barriers to education, to healthcare, and to opportunities to earn a living.

We also know that there are stories of hope. Our partners are working to create change for tomorrow in the lives of women and girls in communities across the world. So what are we called to do? How do we prepare and act today in light of God's now but not yet kingdom? This kit aims to allow groups to biblically, honestly and practically consider their response to extreme poverty in our world today and to respond faithfully in every area of our lives.

Getting started

The idea behind this Group Guide is to equip you with the resources you need to guide your group towards taking action. As a facilitator, we encourage you to read through the material, to consider where your group might be at and how you might commit to taking action together.

There are four Bible Studies to guide your reflection:

- **Session 1 | Examine** – taking time to examine our own lives before God in a world experiencing extreme poverty.
- **Session 2 | The Cross in a violent world** – understanding the Cross and how we respond to the violence in today's world.
- **Session 3 | A new day** – reimagining the role of women in God's tomorrow.
- **Session 4 | Empowered to make change** – the role of the Holy Spirit in leading us to justice.

The aim of this Group Guide is to instigate meaningful discussion and action, so please feel able to use it as best meets the needs of your group. You may choose to do only one section or you may choose to work through each session over a number of meetings. As we like to say, the goal isn't to 'get through' all of the material, but to engage with it in a way that makes sense for you.





A plan of action

Where is your group at?

Our three-tiered action plan is designed to help your group take action both together and within your local community. It doesn't matter what stage you're at, or even if your group spans all three tiers – this resource will help kick start your group's response to the issue of extreme poverty around the world.

Which expression best describes your group: Are you 'dipping your toe' into these issues? Are you 'knee-deep' in them? Or are you ready to 'dive right in'? Each set of actions is designed to help your group deepen your commitment to the issue of extreme poverty.

For more ideas on ways to take action visit www.fortomorrow.org.au and also sign up to be an Ambassador for Tomorrow at www.fortomorrow.org.au/ambassadors

The topic of poverty is relatively new to your group but you are ready to explore more about how you can support communities living in extreme poverty around the world.



How might your group dip its toe in to this topic?

Buy a Useful Gift. TEAR's partners are working with communities in many different countries to improve the health and wellbeing of women. Useful Gifts empower these communities by providing the skills and opportunities they might not otherwise be able to access. Choose your gift at www.usefulgifts.org

Pray together. Visit www.fortomorrow.org.au to receive weekly prayers to use alongside this resource.

Join the Campaign for Australian Aid at www.australianaid.org Australian Aid provides opportunities for women living in extreme poverty to build a brighter future.

Have a meal with your family. Make a dish from one of TEAR's partner communities and discuss the recipe and the challenges facing that community. Find out more at www.fortomorrow.org.au or check out Appendix 2 for recipes.



Perhaps your group is aware of the issues surrounding global poverty, and has already taken steps to support initiatives and campaigns around this issue. You want to increase your support and deepen your understanding but you're unsure what to do next.

How might your group wade into this topic?

Fundraise for TEAR. Run a morning tea, or set up a Useful Gifts Shop in your church, your home or community group. You can set up a fundraising page at usefulgifts.org and sell useful gifts online, or accept donations towards a particular gift. These can be run all year and are particularly popular at Easter and Christmas. www.usefulgifts.org/community/shops

Use your social media platform to join the conversation on Australian Aid. Make your voice count using @campaignforaid and #australianaid. These campaigns tell of the effectiveness of Australia's foreign aid and lobby government to do more to tackle extreme poverty and gender inequality worldwide.

Hold a clothes swap. Invite friends, family and your local community to bring their unwanted clothes and swap them for something 'new'. Share stories of women across the world who are supported by TEAR's partners. For tips on how to run an event visit www.tear.org.au/act/tear-reps/resources-for-tear-reps

Pray together regularly as a group. Use Praying Together for Tomorrow to guide your group prayer. Visit www.fortomorrow.org.au

Invite friends over for a meal. Share a story from TEAR's partners or watch a video together. Find out more at www.fortomorrow.org.au

Become a TEAR Rep in your church and champion the cause of the world's poor. Find out more at www.tear.org.au/act/tear-reps



Your group is committed to addressing the issue of extreme poverty and is ready to challenge each other and your community to take action.

How might your group dive right in to this topic?

Commit to regular giving. Regular giving helps to create lasting, sustainable change for communities living in extreme poverty around the world. Choose from the giving options online at www.tear.org.au/giving

Hold a 'We're for Australian Aid' event in your community. Use the 'What we're for' event Resource Pack to help plan your event: www.australianaid.org/resources

Bake your MP a cake. Charlie Pickering debunks some of the myths surrounding foreign aid in his video, and uses a pie to show just how little of the budget we give away. Visit your MP with a cake and ask them to commit to the Global Goals to end poverty around the world. Watch: <http://j.mp/australianaid>

Invite your neighbours to share a meal together. In Session 1, Justin Duckworth talks about the practise of 'generous hospitality' – commit as a group to invite others into your homes and hear each other's stories.

Go as a group to Voices for Justice. Micah's 2016 Voices for Justice events are you opportunity to raise your voice and influence our nation's leaders on behalf of the world's poorest people in the lead up to the 2016 election: www.micahaustralia.org



Session 1 | Examine

Note to Facilitator: *The purpose of this study is to examine our own lives and our actions as followers of Christ. In particular we must examine ourselves in light of the relationship we have to extreme poverty. This is a session of honest self-reflection, of acknowledgement and of repentance. The Bible Study, prepared by **Jonathan Cornford** from Manna Gum, unpacks these themes as they coincide with the Christian season of Lent – the 40 days leading up to Easter. Later on, you’ll need access to the internet to watch the videos that form part of this study.*

› **Eat together** Using one of the recipes from Appendix 2, share a meal together as a group. Consider the community the recipe comes from, and the role of the women who prepare it. What challenges might they face?

Lent is a season of preparation. It is a season of themes centring on judgement, fasting and repentance – a season of sackcloth and ashes. These are highly unpopular themes these days and they are much misunderstood. At the heart of the Lenten journey is the challenge to *confront the truth about ourselves and the world that we live in*. It is only when we come to terms with the depths of human fallenness and suffering in the world that we can then appreciate the full significance, joy and hope of what is to come on Easter Sunday.

› **Reflect** We live in a culture that is radically focussed on personal gratification, whether it be food, entertainment, household comfort or career achievement. How do you feel about words such as ‘judgement’, ‘fasting’ and ‘repentance’? Do you have positive or negative associations with them? Discuss where your associations with these words come from and whether they form a part of your understanding of faith.

Judgement

› **Read Joel 2:1-17**

This text is one of the traditional readings for Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, and let’s be honest, it is a frightening and intimidating text – “the day of the Lord is coming, it is near – a day of darkness and gloom [...] Who can endure it?”

The first part of the text (vv.1-11) describes ‘the day of the Lord’ and what is described is a day of *judgement*. In the prophet’s view, God’s judgement of the condition of humanity is less than happy. In a similar vein, the prophet Amos asked his people, “Why do you ask for the day of the Lord? It is darkness, not light” (Amos 5:18). The Greek word which is translated as ‘judgement’ in our New Testament is *krisis*; it is the same word from which we derive our English word ‘crisis’. Judgement is a time of crisis, when things come to a head and a crunch point is reached.

But, as the saying goes, every crisis is a moment of opportunity. Notice that this proclamation of judgement through the prophet Joel is immediately followed by an opportunity to *turn around*: “‘Yet even now,’ says the Lord, ‘return to me with all your heart [...] Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relents from punishing’” (vv.12-13). This is almost

“It is only when we come to terms with the depths of human fallenness and suffering in the world that we can then appreciate the full significance, joy and hope of what is to come on Easter Sunday.”

Jonathan Cornford

always the case throughout the Bible; the purpose of judgement is to jolt us out of our apathy and wake us up to reality. It is only when confronted with reality – as opposed to the illusions we like to construct around ourselves – that we are fully aware of our desperate need to turn back to God.

› **Watch** Tearfund’s video on the definition of poverty: www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5qig9HIJ7k

› **Discuss**

- Consider the deep roots of extreme global poverty. What do you know about how it came about, and how well is poverty being dealt with now?
- Do you think the language of Joel – whether of judgement or ‘weeping and mourning’ (v.12) is a reasonable response to the depth of suffering and injustice inherent in extreme poverty? How do we in the Western world often respond when we encounter the depth of suffering and extreme poverty? Does it include a response similar to that of ‘judgement’ or ‘weeping and mourning’?
- Does poverty involve a ‘crunch point’ – a time when humans must make different choices or suffer the consequences?
- In what ways might we be personally implicated in perpetuating global poverty? That is, in what ways do we too come under judgement? What things can we undertake personally and practically that represent a turning back to God, and to God’s heart for justice?

Fasting

› **Read** Isaiah 58:1-12

Did you notice that in the Joel reading, the call to turn back to God was accompanied by a call to fasting (Joel 2:12-15)? In Matthew chapter six, Jesus discusses fasting (vv.16-18) assuming that his followers are people who engage in fasting. The question for Jesus is not if you should fast, but how you fast and for what purpose.

In this text from Isaiah, the prophet challenges hollow religious practices that have come to be exercised in public piety and self-righteousness, and he recalls the people to ‘true fasting’, which centres around the practice of justice, mercy and compassion. That is, the purpose of true fasting is the restoring of shalom – everything in right relationship. Fasting is something that is required when things have become out of kilter. Notice that it is only in *working for such healing* and restoration that we experience healing and restoration (vv.8-12). Lent is a time of fasting, preparing us for the Cross. How might we engage in the true fasting of justice, mercy and compassion during this time?

› **Watch** Justin Duckworth is the Anglican Bishop of Wellington, New Zealand. For many years Justin and his wife Jenny have worked with broken people in Wellington, especially women and girls, seeking to share something of God’s Kingdom on earth.

In this video, Justin shares about the season of Lent and the practice of generous hospitality he is inviting those in his churches to practise instead of the traditional fasting from particular foods. Go to 4tm.me/lentl



› Discuss

- As Justin shares, it is traditional in the season of Lent for Christians to give up meat, sweet foods, alcohol, caffeine or some other luxuries. Continue to think about the issue you discussed in the previous section: Are there any ways in which giving something up – that is the denial of self-gratification – might make some sort of contribution to restoring shalom?
- What about the idea of taking something up during this season? If true fasting is justice, mercy and compassion, in addition to or instead of *giving something up*, could you *take up* generous hospitality, letter writing advocacy or other actions that are mentioned at the beginning of this group guide. How might you do this together as a group?

Repentance

› Read Matthew 3:1-12

John the Baptist appears in the wilderness with a prophetic message very similar to that of Joel and Isaiah, but it comes with a new note: the Kingdom of Heaven is *near*. But before the wonders and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven can be opened up, one thing is required: *repentance*. We tend to associate repentance with being sorry for things we have done wrong, however, the word (*metanoia* in Greek) actually means to take on a new mind, or as the Apostle Paul says, to be ‘transformed in the renewing of your minds’ (Romans 12:2). It is precisely this message that Jesus will take up when he begins his ministry (Matthew 4:17). To walk with Jesus requires seeing the world and our own lives from a wholly different perspective – from God’s perspective.

› **Discuss** It is natural to want to insulate ourselves from the pain of the world, but this is not God’s way. How might we use the Lenten journey to more fully open our hearts and minds, and then our lives, to the human drama we see around us? What is one thing each member of the group can commit to opening their hearts up to?

› **Reflect** The traditional Ash Wednesday blessing captures both the stark reality of the human condition and the incredible hope to which we are called – you might like to try it with your group:

- Mark the sign of the cross in ash on each other’s forehead with the accompanying blessing: “From dust you came, to dust you will return. Turn to God and live!”

- Light a candle and in silence, contemplate the meaning of these words.

› **Choose** as a group which actions you might commit to, either during Lent or over the next couple of months.

› **Pray** Make space to pray together. You may want to use the prayer provided by Sally Tonkin and pray for women and communities experiencing poverty.



PRAYING TOGETHER for Tomorrow

As followers of Christ, we come to you, with hearts ready and open to reflect your nature and your heart.

Lord God, so often there is need within our own lives, yet we know that there is always need in the community, afar and in our backyard. Show us where we can participate in these needs, where it is life giving for all.

We bring to you a heartfelt request to enable us to have eyes to see how WE can participate in matters of injustice, poverty and even the things we're not sure what to do with.

**Prayer by Sally Tonkin
Chief Executive Officer, St Kilda Gatehouse**

Design by Adelaide Daniell



Session 2 | The Cross in a violent world

Note to Facilitator: *The purpose of this study by **Matt Anslow** is to explore the connection between violence and extreme poverty. Central to the discussion is the subject of peacemaking. Given the topic, you will need to make space for those in the group to share their thoughts on this subject. Please ensure that you are sensitive to the real possibility that those within the group may have personal experiences of violence.*

The session then moves to examine the implications for peacemaking in communities experiencing extreme poverty, examining one of TEAR's overseas partners' experiences.

- › **Watch** TEAR's partner in India, Saahasee, works with women living in urban slum areas in Thana, near Mumbai. When we spoke to the women in these communities about their hopes for a future beyond poverty, many made the link to an end to violence and oppression. Go to 4tm.me/lentl

› **Read John 12:12-15**

In his ministry, Jesus had challenged the injustice and corruption of those leaders who controlled the Jerusalem establishment. Now he faces his impending death by their cunning design; without running, but by determinedly walking into it.

Not that his murder was expected. The people, including Jesus' disciples, had hoped this peasant from Nazareth would be their Messiah, the one who would overthrow their foreign oppressors and re-establish an independent nation of Israel.

So when they heard that Jesus was about to enter Jerusalem, their imaginations went into overdrive. In expectant fervour they laid palm branches out on the road in front of his warhorse, a seemingly innocent symbol that originated during Israel's military victory led by the Maccabees.

But in their frenzy the people seem to miss a small but important detail: unlike in the regular processions of military leaders, Jesus isn't actually riding a warhorse. He's riding a humble donkey.

- › **Discuss** the significance of Jesus' choice to ride on a donkey. (Hint: John quotes from Zechariah 9:9. Read Zechariah 9:9-13 and discuss its relevance for interpreting this event.)

And so the Messiah comes riding a donkey – he is not the Messiah they expect. It might be like someone riding into a contemporary occupied territory – such as East Jerusalem today – on a parade float rather than a tank.

Peacemaking

Jesus has not come as a conqueror, but as a peacemaker. The one who proclaimed that peacemakers are blessed, and who has embodied peacemaking in his ministry, will not turn to violence even in the face of impending violence and execution.

“Fear not, daughter of Zion;
behold, your king is coming,
... sitting on a donkey’s colt!”

John 12:15

- › **Reflect** What is peacemaking? Invite members of the group to share their thoughts and understanding of peacemaking.
- › **Discuss** how the definition of peacemaking below reshapes your own thinking. Under this definition, what activities can be defined as ‘peacemaking’?

“The problem for contemporary Christians is that we tend to imagine peace as simply the absence of conflict or violence. But in the biblical tradition, peace is shalom, which is difficult to translate into English, and means something like ‘completeness’ or ‘wholeness’ or something being ‘fulfilled’. For Jesus and his contemporaries, peace is the presence of wholeness and flourishing – everything in its right place. Peacemaking, then, is the practice of individuals and communities joining in God’s ongoing project of setting the world right.” **Matt Anslow**

The Cross

Perhaps the most striking form of peacemaking practised by Jesus is at the time of his death on the Cross. Having told his disciples to refrain from violent self-defence (John 18:10-11), Jesus is betrayed and abandoned by his friends (Mark 14:43-52), faces a sham trial (Mark 14:53-65) leading to his unjust condemnation through the collusion of the Jerusalem aristocracy with their Roman imperial occupiers (Mark 15:1-15). He is tortured and humiliated. He is crucified.

Jesus’ death is that of a scapegoat, killed in order to bring a false peace to the nation (John 11:45-50). And yet, despite the injustice of his death, Jesus does not fight back. He is prepared to die rather than kill. More than that, he prays that God will forgive his unrepentant murderers (Luke 23:34).

Challenging as it may be to us – those who live in societies that exert much power over those less powerful in the world – Jesus’ death, and his refusal to resist it violently, is God’s ‘No!’ to the world’s violence. More importantly, it is God’s ‘Yes!’ to the possibility of living nonviolently in a violent world, of being makers of peace amid brokenness.

Jesus’ death reminds us that the kingdom of God challenges our understanding about how to get a ‘good result’: Jesus refuses to use violence to achieve ‘peace’, since this is not the way of the kingdom. Instead, as Stanley Hauerwas has said, “[Jesus] gave [us] a new way to deal with offenders – by forgiving them. He gave [us] a new way to deal with violence – by suffering.”¹

› Discuss

- The example of peacemaking Jesus gives us in the days leading up to and including his death. What stands out to you? What challenges you?
- What does this example mean for the community of Jesus’ followers today?



Session 2 | The Cross in a violent world



Our world today

All of this may seem a bit abstract, even idealistic. After all, the world is incredibly violent, whether in Syria, Afghanistan or Central Africa, or even in our own neighbourhoods. But the example of TEAR's partners is a constant reminder to us that all around the world faithful followers of Jesus are finding creative, loving ways to overcome violence, whether it is physical, sexual, emotional, ecological or spiritual.

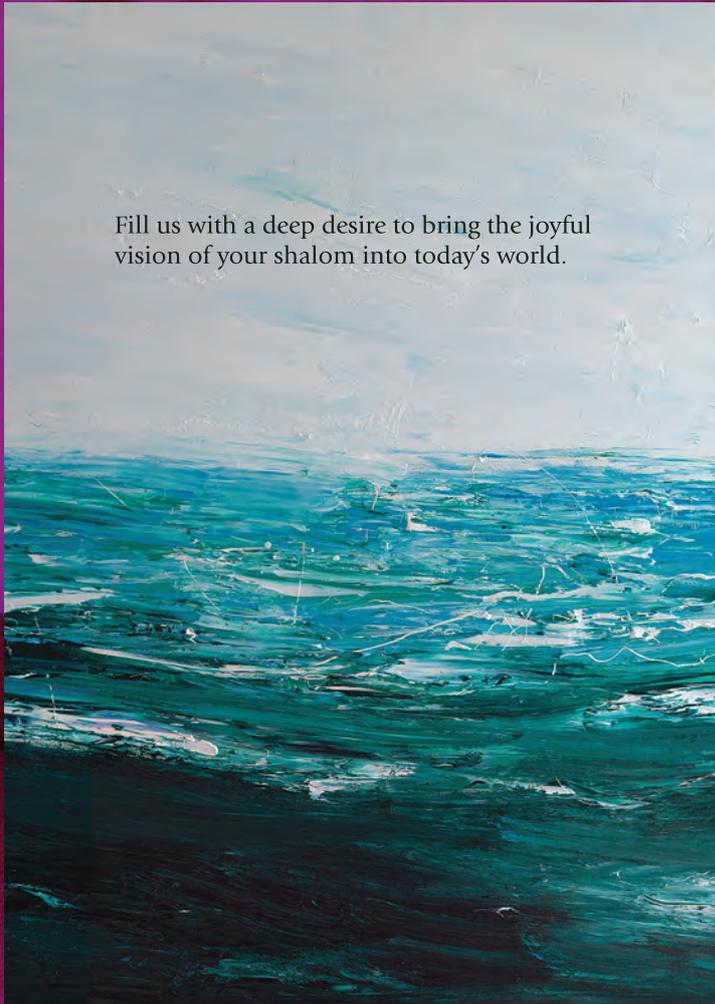
- › **Share** Take a moment to read the story of Saahasee and how, through their Self-Help Group model, they are addressing extreme poverty and also tackling violence. 4tm.me/shg

For Saahasee and other TEAR partners, being peacemakers in a violent world is only possible because ultimately God is making all things new: God is bringing about a tomorrow of peace and healing for the world. TEAR's partners – and all who would seek to be peacemakers – are participating in that future reality now, in the present. They are following the way of Jesus, demonstrated to us decisively on the cross, that the world's violence is coming to an end, and we are invited to live a different way now. In the Resurrection we witness God's vindication of Jesus' refusal to do violence.

In other words, the Resurrection demonstrates God's 'Yes!' to peacemaking.

- › **Commit** Spend some time working on your group actions and reflecting on today's theme of peacemaking.
- › **Pray** for TEAR's partners who are working in places of conflict and insecurity, such as Afghanistan and South Sudan. Pray that these countries might experience glimpses of the Prince of Peace in new and profound ways. You might like to use Carolyn Francis' prayer as a starting point.

¹ Hauerwas, Stanley, *Matthew*, 2006



Fill us with a deep desire to bring the joyful vision of your shalom into today's world.

PRAYING TOGETHER for Tomorrow

God of grace and hope, fill us with a deep desire to bring the joyful vision of your shalom into today's world. Energise our living, serving and loving with your Spirit of Life so that we welcome all people into your future of justice, peace and flourishing.

In the name of Christ, Amen.

**Prayer by Rev Carolyn Francis
Associate Minister, Collins Street Baptist Church**

Design by Matthew Deutscher





“Saahasee is called by God’s love to see every poor home in our nation empowered and celebrating life in community where dignity, freedom and justice prevail.”

- The vision statement of TEAR’s partner Saahasee

Vimel’s story runs throughout this Group Guide. Her story is one that is shared with many women living in extreme poverty around the world. In India, as in many countries globally, women continue to face gender-based discrimination as the cultural institution of son preference persists. Girls face barriers to education and are more likely to be married early.

TEAR’s partner Saahasee works with women like Vimel through a Self-Help Group model. Through these groups, Saahasee offers these women training to become community leaders and provides economic and social opportunities.



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Session 3 | A new day

Note to Facilitator: *The following study, by **Barbara Deutschmann**, considers the role of women at the time of Jesus and in today's world. We know that women make up around 70% of the world's poor and are often the ones most affected by poverty. We also know that this is not what God intended for the world and that we, as Christians, are called to respond to this injustice.*

There would be no TEAR Australia, and indeed, no Christianity, without the resurrection. Far from being just a story that proves Jesus' divinity, or a myth about hope, the resurrection is the moment that alerts us to profound transformations made possible in the world and in us as individuals. The resurrection helps us to reimagine the world. Could there really be places of healing instead of suffering? Forgiveness instead of vengeance? Love instead of hate? Life instead of death? As this new imaginary world began to take shape in the hearts of the earliest disciples, skepticism raised plenty of doubts.

First, a change in their way of seeing was needed. That is what Luke recounts in the last chapters of his gospel. (Leon Morris: *"The apostles were not men poised on the brink of belief and needing only the shadow of an excuse before launching forth into a proclamation of resurrection. They were utterly skeptical."*)¹

Luke's gospel is full of carefully crafted stories and for many generations these stories would have been told aloud, rather than read individually. Have someone in your group tell this story as a storyteller might.



› **Read** Luke 24:1-12

- What strikes you about this story? Are there words, phrases or images that speak to you? Share these with each other.

Listen to the story again or read it out loud.

- Luke shapes the story around a contrast between the women and Peter. What conclusions do you draw from this?
- “On the first day of the week...” Why does Luke begin with this note? (Consider Genesis and Revelation patterns of the seven-day week.)
- Luke’s use of the verb ‘to remember’ in 22:61 and Acts 11:16 suggests that in Luke 24:6,8, we are not dealing with an ordinary recollection of past events. What did ‘remembering’ mean for the women?

Luke’s perspectives

Each gospel tells the story a little differently and Luke has his special perspectives. He is clearly interested in women’s responses to Jesus. He charts the involvement of women in Jesus’ ministry in a number of places. They, along with the Twelve, were part of his travelling ministry, providing for Jesus’ needs out of their own means (8:1-3).

- Read 24:6-7 along with 18:31-34 and 9:22. What does this reveal about the group of women?

- › **Watch** Ruth Padilla DeBorst discusses the systemic injustices that devalue women. Go to 4tm.me/lentl

Feminist perspectives

Good Bible readers not only consider the authors’ perspectives but also their own. Feminist Bible scholars have helped us see not only the male-focused perspectives of Bible writers but also made female perspectives more visible. Not only do Bible writers focus on male perspectives, traditional Bible commentary can also compound the problem. Mary Magdalene is a case in point.

› **Discuss**

- What are the traditional views of Mary Magdalene? How has she been portrayed? (One example is Ernest Renan who, in 1863, built up Mary Magdalene as a hallucinating witness whose love made her imagine that Jesus was personally risen and whose testimony convinced the other disciples. Do a quick internet search and see what you find about her. Include images.)

The New Testament tells us little about her except that she was healed of seven demons (Luke 8:2), something that was often associated with a wretched mental health condition. From the time of her healing she becomes an active follower. She was at the crucifixion and the burial and is the first person at the tomb in all four gospels. She is the first to receive a special encounter with Jesus (John 20:10-18). Some commentators suggest this is an example of Jesus appearing ‘even’ to women. The fact is, Mary Magdalene was clearly one entrusted to understand and respond appropriately, a tribute to her status among the disciples.

¹ Morris, Leon, *The Gospel According to St. Luke* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) 1974

Session 3 | A new day



› Reflect

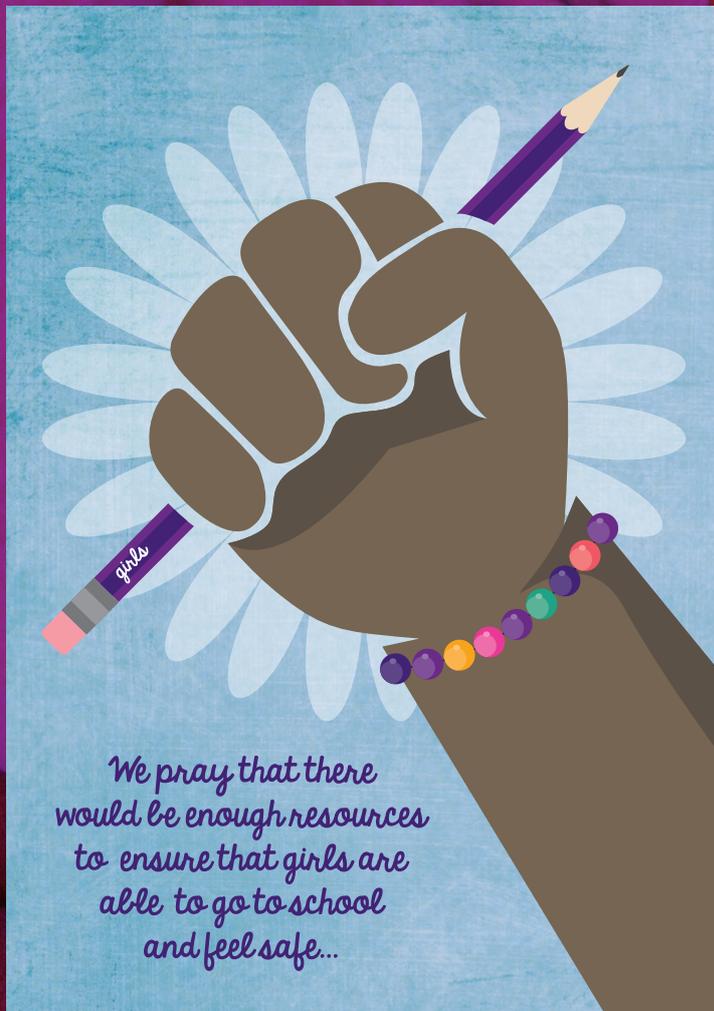
Unfortunately, the same bias that affects some Bible reading also affects the way we see (or don't see) women in our world. In his account of the woman who anointed Jesus in Luke 7:36-50, Jesus challenges Simon the Pharisee: "Do you see this woman?" (v44) Jesus bids Simon to see her, not only as an unnoticed guest but also as a person who inhabits the same time and place as he does. Like us, Simon saw what he wanted or expected to see. It takes a change in perspective to bring women to equal visibility in the world.

The following article considers the results of that unseeing in our country: <http://j.mp/smartne>

Women in developing countries struggle with life and death issues. The combination of reproductive roles, poverty and marginalisation can be deadly. At TEAR Australia, our partners work with women to ensure their voices are heard. To learn more about how women are being supported by TEAR's partners visit www.fortomorrow.org.au/stories/partners

And in a great advance for women across the globe, the newly-conceived Sustainable Development Goals have made gender equality a major focus sustainabledevelopment.un.org

- › **Pray** In Luke's gospel the angel challenges the women, "Why do you look for the living among the dead?" Close your study by prayerfully considering where you will find the living Christ active in today's world and where the signs of resurrection may be found.
- › **Commit** Spend some time working on your group actions.



PRAYING TOGETHER for Tomorrow

Father, we pray for young girls, women and mothers all over the world who have to make innumerable sacrifices of education, health and enough food so that others in their family may enjoy the same. We pray that there would be enough resources to ensure that girls are able to go to school and feel safe; that families, including mothers, will have enough to eat. We pray for health care that is easily accessible and affordable so that sick mothers are able to get treated in time. Help us to be mindful of these issues so that we are able to support and ask for programs and policies that will not push a woman in poverty into deeper despair.

**Prayer by Kuki Rokhum
Director – Training and Mobilisation, EFICOR**

Design by Rebecca Jeffrey



Session 4 | Empowered to make change

Note to Facilitator: *This study by Pip Berglund explores the animating power of the Holy Spirit in enabling God's people to live justly in a world where millions are impacted by extreme poverty. More self-reflective in style and focus than previous sessions, this study looks at the birth of the Church at Pentecost and calls on participants to reflect and discuss how they are being empowered to join with others in working for God's tomorrow.*

› Watch

Vimel's story is one of courage and hope. It is a story that speaks of positive change, yet also ongoing struggle. She is a member of a Self-Help Group, run by TEAR's Indian partner Saahasee. Saahasee works in communities experiencing poverty and marginalisation and seeks to empower them towards fullness of life. Vimel's story speaks to the idea that God's Kingdom is now, but not fully yet. Go to 4tm.me/lent1

- What strikes you about Vimel's life?
- What do you find hopeful?
- What do you find difficult?

› Reflect

Like Vimel and the community she is part of, much of the world today is littered with stories of struggle and pain, often with very few glimpses of hope. Yet the Pentecost account reminds us that God's Spirit is actively at work in the world, even in the most seemingly dark places, empowering and enabling the Church as God's people to work for justice.

- Take a moment to reflect on your own experiences of working for justice with others. How has God's Spirit been at work during these times?

› Read Acts 2

About Pentecost

The day of Pentecost had come. This was a time of celebration for the Jewish people as they recalled God's grace evidenced in the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. God had formed a new nation and had called them to live as his people, dedicated to him and living out his ways together as a community and in response to the world around them.

› Reflect

In verse 12, the people ask the question, "What does this mean?" This is a powerful discipleship question then and now.

Pip Berglund, who works for Micah Australia, has written a reflection on this passage in Acts. She says, "As a mum, my children are always asking me to explain the meaning of things, but I think I ask it myself even more frequently. Perhaps not verbally but reflectively, as I consider how to live out my faith, to follow Jesus truthfully, to receive and offer grace, to be present in this real world with all its darkness whilst seeking out, living out,



and inviting others into light. More than once in my day I stop and ask – what does this mean?”

What does it mean to live by the Spirit and not by the ways of the world?

› **Discuss** in your group the significance of the Holy Spirit coming at Pentecost.

› **Read Joel 2:28-32**

In responding to the crowd’s question, Peter highlights that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an indication that a new day had dawned. N.T. Wright states that, *“the point of Pentecost was not so much the offer of a new spiritual experience as the declaration of a new spiritual reality. God’s history with the world had turned a decisive corner.”*¹

- In what ways is this declared in Peter’s sermon?
- What is significant about Peter’s use of Joel’s prophecy?
- What does that ‘new spiritual reality’ mean to you today?
- Do you today see evidence of the ‘decisive corner’ being turned towards justice?

› **Reflect**

The disciples and those who heard Peter’s sermon did not stop at a confession of faith nor an act of baptism on the day of Pentecost. Rather, empowered by the Holy Spirit they sought to demonstrate, as N.T. Wright powerfully states, that Pentecost *“is about the powerful presence of Jesus with his people; about the implementation of Jesus’ healing, saving rule through his people; and thirdly about the anticipation, in and through*

*that work, of the final day when heaven and earth shall be one.”*²

We, as the body of Christ today, are equipped and called to the same task by the same Spirit under the same king. We are empowered by the hope found as we look forward to a future where God’s kingly rule will be complete. Empowered by hope to deeply engage in this world as we bear witness and herald in the reign of Jesus.

› **Discuss** As a group, take some time to consider the journey of reflection and action you have gone on during these past four studies. What has been most significant and life giving?

› **Commit**

Now turn your attention to what lies ahead. What action(s) will you take together to demonstrate the kind of spirit-empowered life depicted in Acts 2 in light of extreme poverty?

- What might this look like for your worship?
- For your common life here together?
- Your Monday through to Sunday?
- What about personally? What action will you take to demonstrate the kind of spirit-empowered life depicted in Acts 2 in light of the world’s present realities?

› **Pray** You might like to use Emma Wyndham Chalmers’ prayer on page 22 as a starting point.

¹ N.T. Wright, Twelve Months of Sundays : Reflections on Bible Readings Year C

² N.T. Wright, Spirit of Truth, Sermon in Durham Cathedral, 2007



Lord, we **HONOUR** and are
HUMBLED by the **STRENGTH** of
women around the world who work
FAITHFULLY, in overwhelmingly
challenging circumstances



PRAYING TOGETHER for Tomorrow

Lord, we honour and are humbled by the strength of women around the world who work faithfully, in overwhelmingly challenging circumstances, to provide for their families and build resilient communities. May we, your church in Australia, work as courageously and as tirelessly as advocates for their rights and opportunities. We give thanks for the many who have already lifted themselves out of poverty. And we pray that the glimpses of a tomorrow we see now in part, may soon become the glorious whole.

Prayer by Emma Wyndham Chalmers
Advocacy Campaigns Mobiliser, TEAR Australia

Design by Heidi Rurade



Contributor profiles

Matt Anslow

Matt Anslow is husband to Ashlee, father to Evie, an educator for TEAR, and coordinates a community garden in Sydney. He is also a PhD student in theology at Charles Sturt University. Since its inception, Matt has been an organiser in the Love Makes a Way movement, a nonviolent direct action response to Australia's ongoing cruelty to refugees. Matt, Ashlee and Evie live in a small intentional community in Sydney, seeking to put their convictions about community into practice in the midst of the mundane.

Pip Berglund

Pip Berglund works with Micah Australia, coordinating Voices for Justice – an initiative through which Christians across Australia gather together for opportunities of worship, training, direct lobbying and advocacy actions. Prior to this, Pip was the director of Plunge, a gap year program at Morling College in Sydney. She has also worked as Campaigns Coordinator for Micah Challenge, as a youth pastor and as a social worker. Pip has a love of community work and development grounded in a Christian framework and is committed to seeing followers of Jesus actively engaged in these areas as an expression of their faith. Find out more at www.micahaustralia.org

Jonathan Cornford

Jonathan Cornford is co-founder of Manna Gum, an independent Christian non-profit organisation which seeks to promote a message which is truly good news: for us, for our neighbours and for the world. Jonathan has a doctorate in political economy and has fifteen years' experience in research and advocacy on aid and development issues. Find out more at www.mannagum.org.au

Barbara Deutschmann

Barbara worked as a teacher in Australia and a health program trainer in India for many years. Until recently, she coordinated the TEAR Australia Indigenous Support Program, from the office in Alice Springs. Long convinced of the importance and power of the Bible in the life of faith, she is working on a PhD on gender in the Genesis narratives of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). She is a founding member of Christians for Biblical Equality, Melbourne chapter, and a member of the Uniting Church in Alice Springs.

This Group Guide was compiled by TEAR's State Team Coordinator Greg Hewson, edited by Rosie Bird and designed by Coby Hallas.





Appendix 1 | Resources for taking action

Live

- › Become an Ambassador for Tomorrow
www.fortomorrow.org.au/ambassadors/become
- › Visit a TEAR project. TEAR's Development Education Experience Programs (DEEPs) offer life-changing opportunities to visit communities supported by TEAR's partners www.tear.org.au/act/deeps
- › Do a 5 minute talk
www.tear.org.au/act/tear-reps/resources-for-tear-reps
- › Host an event
www.tear.org.au/act/tear-reps/resources-for-tear-reps

Give

- › Purchase a Useful Gift that will help communities living in extreme poverty www.usefulgifts.org
- › Become a regular giver
www.tear.org.au/give/regular
- › Create a Partnership with TEAR between your group and a community experiencing the impacts of extreme poverty. Call Ben Allsop TEAR's Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator about how you can start today on (03) 9264 7000.

Learn

- › Read the Five areas of hope for Tomorrow resource
www.fortomorrow.org.au/ambassadors/resource/five-areas-of-hope-fortomorrow
- › Take part in a simulation game to see what it might be like to live in a slum
www.tear.org.au/resources/basti-life
- › Watch the video. Hope for Tomorrow – The women of Thane, India
www.fortomorrow.org.au/ambassadors/resource/hope-fortomorrow-the-women-of-thane-india-video
- › Attend Voices for Justice Campaigning Events
www.micahaustralia.org/voicesforjustice

› Stories

TEAR supporters responding to extreme poverty:

www.fortomorrow.org.au/stories/blog

Communities around the world experiencing extreme poverty:

www.fortomorrow.org.au/stories/partners

www.fortomorrow.org.au/stories/story/the-face-of-a-woman

www.fortomorrow.org.au/stories/story/the-prayers-and-songs-of-women

Advocate

› Campaigns

Campaign for Australian Aid
www.australianaid.org

Micah Australia
www.micahaustralia.org

› Tools

How to research an issue
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-research-an-issue

How to write a letter to your MP
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-write-a-letter-to-your-mp

How to visit your MP
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-visit-your-mp

How to create an (offline) petition
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-create-a-petition-offline

How to write a letter to the editor
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-write-a-letter-to-the-editor

How to work with the media
www.tear.org.au/resources/working-with-the-media-guide

How to submit a Freedom Of Information (FOI) request
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-how-to-submit-an-foi-request

How to take Non-Violent Direct Action
www.tear.org.au/resources/advocacy-guide-introduction-to-christian-non-violent-direct-action-nvda

Pray

The Lent 2016 prayers
www.fortomorrow.org.au/lent

Make me an instrument of your Tomorrow
www.fortomorrow.org.au/getinvolved/action/1-billion-in-cuts-to-australian-aid-a-prayerful-response



Sharing a meal together

Food is a great way to bring people together. Whether it's your family, your friends and neighbours, or even strangers, connection is forged when we share a meal together.

You'll notice that the recipes below, from TEAR's partners around the world, are vegetarian. That's because they're everyday recipes, and most families would only eat meat for special occasions. Vegetarian dishes are nutritious, healthy and delicious, and more affordable to grow and buy for families.

Xima with Greens

This typical Mozambican meal is eaten with the hands, which are first washed in a bowl of warm water, then shaken dry. The xima (pronounced she-ma) is rolled in the palm of the hand and then dipped in relish. Serves four.

> Ingredients

- 1 cup corn meal (polenta)
- 4 cups water
- 1 tablespoon salt

> Directions

1. Heat water in a large pot until boiling. Add 1 tablespoon salt.
2. Whisk in 1 cup of polenta to the water.
3. Stir constantly until the mixture is thick and hard to stir and polenta tastes soft and not gritty.
4. Remove from heat. Using a wooden paddle, spoon xima patties onto a plate. Each xima patty will develop a tough, outer skin. Inside, they should have the consistency of mashed potatoes.

> Green ingredients

- 1 onion
- 1 bunch kale/spinach/silverbeet
- 6 tomatoes (peeled and chopped, or 1 can)
- Salt
- Oil

> Directions

1. Chop onions and sauté until brown.
2. Slice greens into 3mm strips. Add to the sautéed onions.
3. Add chopped tomatoes and salt, simmer for 5 minutes, then serve with the xima.

Laos Salad

This salad is served as a main dish. Serves four.

> Ingredients

- 1 cup celery, thinly sliced
- 4 spring onions (halved lengthwise, then cut into pieces)
- 1 bunch coriander (leaves only)
- 1 cup mint leaves
- 2 medium tomatoes (halved and cut into very thin slices)
- 1 cup cucumber (thinly sliced)
- 2 heads of romaine lettuce (inner leaves only)
- 2 heads of butter lettuce (inner leaves only)
- 2 bunches of watercress (large stems removed)
- 4 hard-boiled eggs (whites and yolks separated)
- 12 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 tablespoons garlic (minced)
- 2 teaspoons palm sugar
- 10 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce

> Directions

1. Combine the celery, spring onion, coriander, mint, tomato, cucumber, lettuce and watercress.
2. Thinly slice the egg whites and add to the mix.
3. Heat the oil in a small frying pan over medium heat.
4. Add the garlic and cook until the garlic turns pale gold.
5. Remove from the heat and let cool.
6. Mash the egg yolks and add the sugar, lemon juice and fish sauce.
7. Beat in the garlic and oil.
8. Toss with the salad, lightly pressing the ingredients together.

Lentil Dhal with Chapati

Chapati and dhal is a typically North Indian dish. Women spend a long time learning to make good chapatis, practising from the time they are young girls. They're often placed over the open flame to puff up, just after being pan fried. Serves four.

Chapati

› Ingredients

- 2 cups wholemeal flour
- 2 cups plain flour
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ cups warm water or as needed

› Directions

1. In a large bowl stir together the wholemeal flour, plain flour and salt. Use a wooden spoon to stir in the olive oil and enough water to make a soft dough that is elastic but not sticky. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface until it is smooth. Divide into 10 parts, or less if you want bigger breads. Roll each piece into a ball. Let rest for a few minutes.
2. Heat a frypan over medium heat until hot and grease lightly. On a lightly floured surface use a floured rolling pin to roll out the balls of dough until very thin. When the pan starts smoking put a chapati on it. Cook until the underside has brown spots, about 30 seconds, then flip and cook on the other side. Remove and keep warm on a plate covered with a tea towel. Continue with remaining dough.

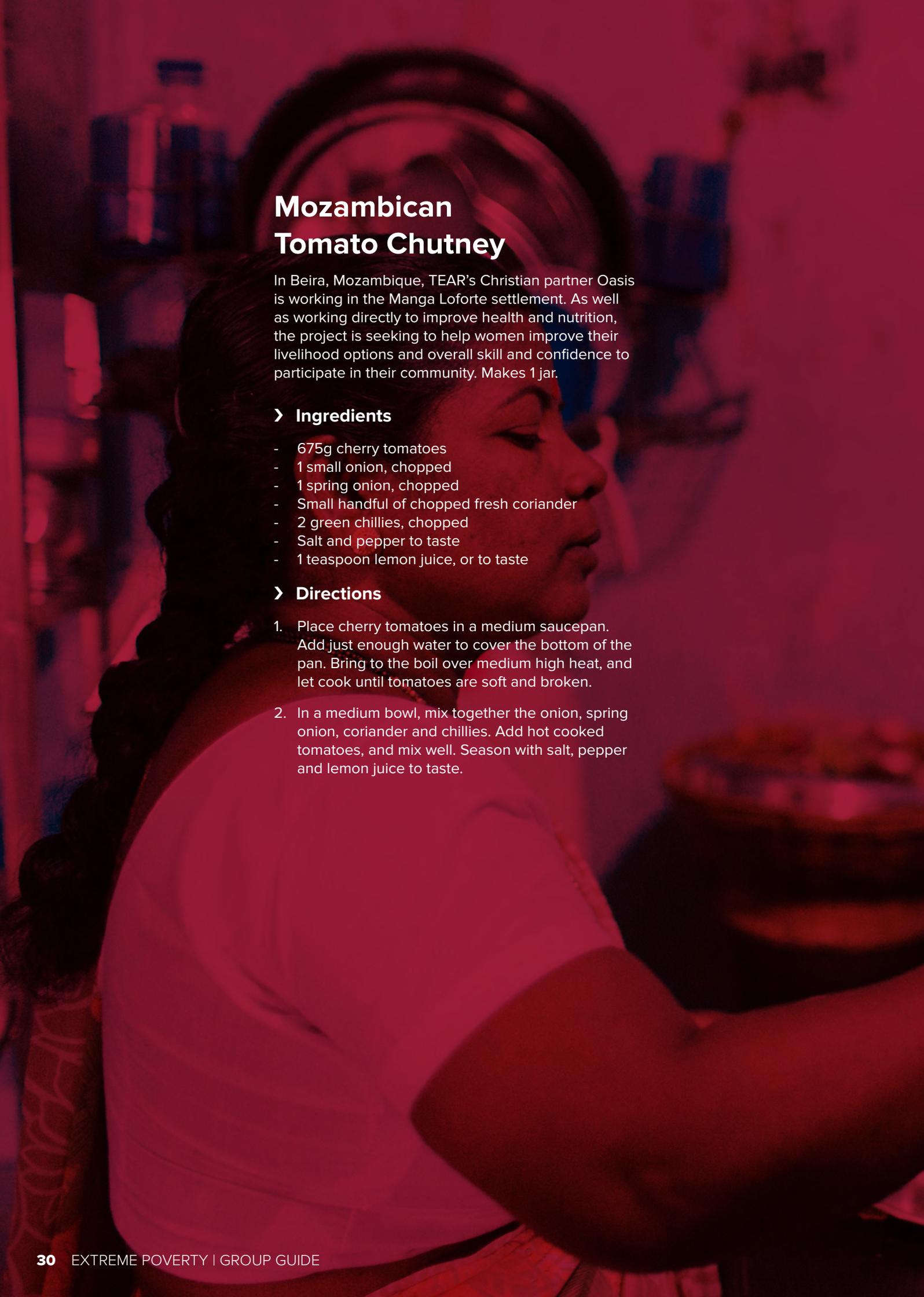
Lentil Dhal

› Ingredients

- 2 cups red lentils, rinsed well
- 6cm fresh ginger, sliced
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 4 tablespoons (80g) butter
- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4 teaspoons turmeric
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- 1 teaspoon chilli flakes
- 4 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1-2 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons chopped coriander leaves
- 6 cups cold water

› Directions

1. Place lentils, ginger, bay leaves and cinnamon in a large saucepan with 6 cups of cold water. Bring to the boil, reduce the heat to medium and simmer, stirring to prevent sticking for 10-12 minutes. Discard bay leaves and cinnamon sticks and set aside.
2. Heat the butter in a large frying pan over a medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook for 3 minutes. Stir in the garlic and spices and cook for a further minute until fragrant.
3. Stir in the lemon juice and season to taste with salt.
4. Add the lentils to the pan and mix well. Cook for a further 3 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat. Stir in coriander and serve with chapatis.



Mozambican Tomato Chutney

In Beira, Mozambique, TEAR's Christian partner Oasis is working in the Manga Loforte settlement. As well as working directly to improve health and nutrition, the project is seeking to help women improve their livelihood options and overall skill and confidence to participate in their community. Makes 1 jar.

› Ingredients

- 675g cherry tomatoes
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 spring onion, chopped
- Small handful of chopped fresh coriander
- 2 green chillies, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice, or to taste

› Directions

1. Place cherry tomatoes in a medium saucepan. Add just enough water to cover the bottom of the pan. Bring to the boil over medium high heat, and let cook until tomatoes are soft and broken.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the onion, spring onion, coriander and chillies. Add hot cooked tomatoes, and mix well. Season with salt, pepper and lemon juice to taste.

Oat cakes

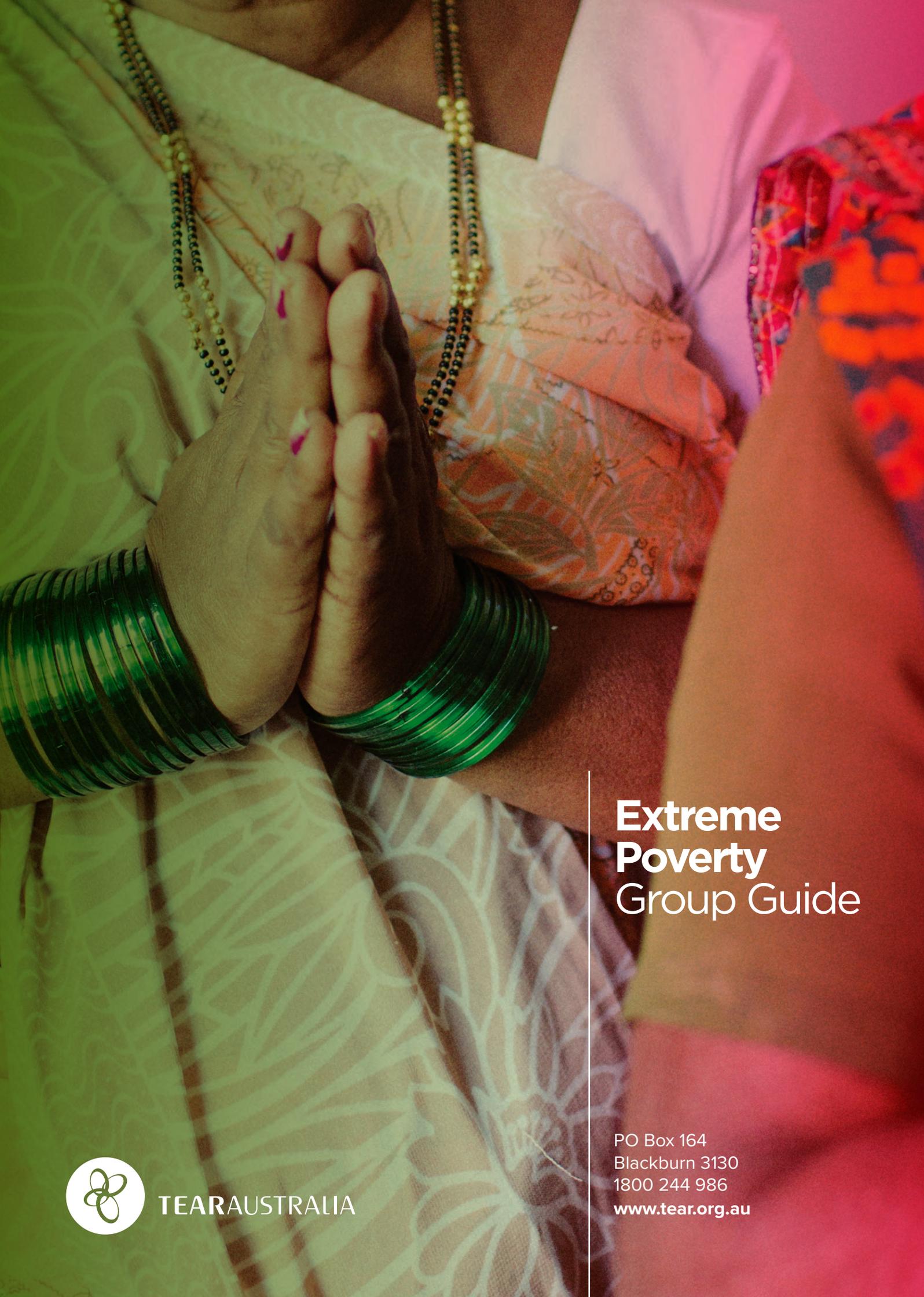
Some of the women on Elcho Island have been making these nutritious and filling pancakes as a way to manage diabetes and improve their health. These, and other healthy foods, are now a regular part of their diet.

› Ingredients

- 3 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup warm water
- ½ cup yoghurt
- 5 eggs
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- Pinch of salt
- Coconut Oil

› Directions

1. Mix the oats, water and yoghurt together and leave overnight on the bench, covered with a tea towel.
2. Next morning add the eggs, baking powder and salt.
3. Cook pancakes in coconut oil.
4. Top with organic butter, yogurt and fruit.
Or enjoy savoury with miso and avocado.



Extreme Poverty Group Guide

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