

## *For kids* **Slow Down - and Fast**

**When you hear the word "fast", what's the first thing that comes to mind?** Maybe it's how fast you are on your skateboard or bicycle. Or it could be how quick you are swimming or running, or your reaction time on your favorite video game.



But there's another meaning for this word that has nothing to do with speed. A fast is also a period of time when a person goes without food. You may not know it, but you fast every day! When you get up in the morning, you've gone for several hours without food. That meal of cereal and orange juice or bacon and eggs is called "breakfast"- you are breaking your fast of the night before when you were sleeping and not eating.

Everybody fasts at night when they are asleep. But some people choose to fast at other times. People of many faiths fast as a way of getting closer to God. During the Holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast during the daylight hours. Some Christians fast during Lent.

By fasting, people not only try to get closer to God, they also hope to be changed. They hope fasting will help them to make a difference in the world.

Many Presbyterians are fasting one weekend a month to call attention to the food crisis in the world today. Even though there is plenty of food in the world for everyone, many, many people do not have enough to eat. When we go without food or something else we are used to having, even for one weekend, it helps us to focus on a serious problem that affects millions of children

In a way, fasting helps us to slow down- to take time to pray and to think about problems in our world. By slowing down through fasting, we can get ready to take action as Christians.

A fast doesn't have to mean giving up food. You are growing and developing and you need fuel to grow. Here are some other ways you might decide to fast over a weekend:

- ✓ **Eat simple meals with your family.** Have meals of soup or beans and rice that cost very little to prepare. Ask your parents to make dinner using foods grown by farmers who live close to your home. Avoid eating meat.
- ✓ **Give up a favorite snack or fast food.** If you normally eat potato chips, candy, or pizza for snacks and drink sodas on the weekend, go without. If you usually buy snacks with your own money, set aside that money to give to a fund to end hunger.
- ✓ **Give up playing video games.** If you usually spend a lot of time playing your favorite games, go without playing for a weekend.
- ✓ **Give up watching TV or a DVD or going to your favorite sites on the Internet.** Read a book or play outside instead.
- ✓ **Give up talking on your cell phone or texting your friends.** Let them know you won't be using your cell phone for a weekend.

What happens when you think about the snack or the soda or the video game you are missing? If you choose to give up something that really matters to you, you're going to miss it a lot! Every time you think about eating a snack, playing a game or texting a friend, offer a prayer to God for hungry people instead.

Talk with your parents about why so many people do not have enough to eat. Talk about what your family could do to help. **Slow down – and fast.**

Learn more at [www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis](http://www.pcusa.org/foodcrisis) and [www.pcusa.org/hunger](http://www.pcusa.org/hunger)