

What's Next: Ideas and Resources for Food Ministries

From the Come to the Table Project, RAFI-USA

Buy a Farm Share - Community-supported agriculture projects (or CSAs) allow members to buy a share of the produce from a local farm. CSA members receive a box of fresh fruit and vegetables every week during the growing season. Some CSA farms invite members to work a few hours on the farm. [Download a fact sheet.](#)

Cooking and Nutrition Classes - Teach others in your community how to cook affordable, healthy meals with foods that are in season. Local extension and health department offices often offer teachers through the [EFNEP](#) program, or you can ask some of the good cooks in your congregation to teach. Think simple and easy.

Community Garden - A community garden is any piece of land that's gardened by a group of people. Community gardens give people the chance to learn more about food and connect across generations, denominations, class, or ethnicity. [Download a fact sheet.](#)

Community Kitchen - Community kitchens are kitchens that are open during certain hours to the community. Commercially certified kitchens allow cooks to sell their products. Churches with day care programs, meal programs, or large facilities often have already certified kitchens.

Connect Generations - As the average age of farmers increases and North Carolina becomes more urban, many young people have no first-hand knowledge of how to grow or prepare local food. Ask youth to interview elders about food and farming. Where did their food come from when they were young? What did they eat? What has changed? Record these interviews, have a story-sharing time, or have children draw or write down what they learned. Include a farm field trip, a meal, or a cooking lesson.

Farmers Markets - If fresh food is scarce in your neighborhood, a market can help bring it in. If a market already exists, look for ways to support it. A farmers market can be held at a rural community center, in a church parking lot, or in a city park. [Download a fact sheet.](#)

Farmworker Camps - Migrant farmworkers in North Carolina live far from home and often lack basic necessities like healthy food, blankets, and adequate clothing. The [Episcopal Farmworker Ministry](#) connects churches with workers to build friendships and help provide for the needs of those who grow our food.

Food and Faith Study Group - Adult study guides like the Council of Churches [Eating Well](#) or the Presbyterian Hunger Coalition's [Just Eating](#) provide an easy way to start discussion about the role of faith communities in building a healthier and more equitable food system.

Gleaning - After harvest, most fields are still filled with produce that got passed over or is not able to be sold because of size or shape. Farmers can receive tax benefits by donating this otherwise unused food. Connect with the [Society of Saint Andrew](#) or the [Interfaith Food Shuttle](#) to organize a trip to a nearby farm to glean.

Land Conservation - Connect with a local land trust to help fund land conservation programs. If your church includes farmers and landowners, contact the [NC Conservation Trust](#) to find out how landowners out what Land Trusts exist in your region and how they can benefit landowners.

Local Food Council - Contact North Carolina groups like [RAFI-USA](#) or [MANNA Food Bank](#) to find out how you can help shape the farm and nutrition policies that affect our state or check out [Why Hunger's](#) resources on the topic.

Seasonal Potlucks - The best way to get people excited about local food is to eat together. In addition to any of these projects, have meals where members are asked to use at least one local ingredient in their dishes. Share recipes.

Summer Feeding Programs - In 2012 only 16% of eligible children took part in the summer food service program. More organizations are needed to prepare meals and host programs in order to connect children with the services they need. [Download a fact sheet.](#)

Services for planting and harvest - Services in the spring and thanksgiving services in the fall are traditional ways to ask God to bless food and the land and people who create it. Services can include blessings of soil and produce brought from farms and gardens. If your church has a connection with one farm or garden, the service could be held there.

Wild game - Deer and other wild game are plentiful in North Carolina. Groups like [Backyard Bow Pro](#) process donations of wild game and get the meat to families in need.