

The “Poverty IQ” of an individual, organization, congregation, community, or nation is *the level of factual understanding of the complexity of poverty that includes: root causes; the impact of the experience of poverty on individuals, the family and the greater community; and the systemic barriers that prevent those experiencing poverty from lifting themselves out of it.*

## GET SOME EXPERIENCE

- **Host and Attend a Poverty Simulation.** An excellent starting point, this three-hour, experiential workshop helps participants begin to understand what it might be like to live in a typical low-income family trying to survive from month to month. To find a Simulation near you, google “poverty simulation [insert your county/city]”, and host one at your church for members and your community. Follow Circles GR on Facebook for Simulations near Grand Rapids.
- **Take the SNAP Challenge.** Begin to understand the food choices that under-resourced Americans must make with the food stamp benefits they receive. Organize a group to find ways to eat well for a month on about \$30 per person per week. Try as a meaningful practice for Lent. Go to [www.snap-challenge.com](http://www.snap-challenge.com) for guidance.

## READ, REFLECT, AND DISCUSS

Consider offering a learning and discussion group that includes both youth and adults.

- *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor*, 2007. Robert D. Lupton. An essential primer on the theology of ministry with persons living in poverty.
- Ubuntu Mutuality/Justice study, UMW, 2011. Free download within Ubuntu Day of Service Toolkit; pages 1-11. <http://www.ministrywith.org/downloads/ubuntutoolkitweb.pdf>
- *Justice for the Poor*, six-week Bible study with Jim Wallis. <https://www.christianbook.com/page/bible-studies/zondervan-downloads/justice-for-the-poor-download>
- *Seeking Shalom: The Small Group Experience*, 2018, Shawn Duncan. “The opposite of poverty isn’t wealth, it’s shalom.” Six-session, video-enhanced series for small groups with Leader Guide, DVD, and Participant Workbook. [www.luptoncenter.org/seekingshalom/](http://www.luptoncenter.org/seekingshalom/)
- *Barking to the Choir: The Power of Radical Kinship*, 2017, and *Tattoos on the Heart: The Power of Boundless Compassion*, 2010, Gregory Boyle, SJ. Stunning, beautiful essays on universal kinship, mutuality, and redemption drawn from Boyle’s ministry with gang members.
- *Charity Detox: What Charity Would Look Like If We Cared About the Results*, 2015. Robert D. Lupton. A guide to evaluating ministry in terms of outcomes/results instead of output/activity.
- Contact [jliske@circlesgr.org](mailto:jliske@circlesgr.org) for workshop and presentation options.

## VISIT WEBSITES

United Way Report on Financial Hardship (Michigan)	<a href="http://www.UnitedWayAlice.org">www.UnitedWayAlice.org</a>
General Board of Global Ministries	<a href="http://www.UMCMission.org">www.UMCMission.org</a> ; <a href="http://www.ministrywith.org">www.ministrywith.org</a>
Ubuntu resources	<a href="http://www.MinistryWith.org/ubuntu toolkit web.pdf">www.MinistryWith.org/ubuntu toolkit web.pdf</a>
Circles USA	<a href="http://www.CirclesUSA.org">www.CirclesUSA.org</a>
Circles Grand Rapids	<a href="http://www.CirclesGR.org">www.CirclesGR.org</a>
Circles Newago County	<a href="http://www.TrueNorthServices.org/circles-newago-county">www.TrueNorthServices.org/circles-newago-county</a>
Circles Ottawa County	<a href="http://www.GoodSamMinistries.com/what-we-do/circles/">www.GoodSamMinistries.com/what-we-do/circles/</a>
Circles Washtenaw County	<a href="http://www.FriendsinDeedmi.org/circles/">www.FriendsinDeedmi.org/circles/</a>
The Chalmers Center	<a href="http://www.Chalmers.org">www.Chalmers.org</a>
The Lupton Center	<a href="http://www.LuptonCenter.org">www.LuptonCenter.org</a>
Poor People's Campaign: A National Call for Moral Revival	<a href="http://www.PoorPeoplesCampaign.org">www.PoorPeoplesCampaign.org</a>

## LEARN MORE ABOUT CIRCLES IN MICHIGAN

**CONTACT A CIRCLES CHAPTER NEAR YOU** to learn more and to find specific ways your congregation can become involved. If you don't live near an existing Chapter, please contact Rev. Julie Liske in Grand Rapids.

**Circles Grand Rapids:** Julie Liske, Chapter Director  
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616-309-7517

**Circles Newago County (Fremont, MI):** Michelle Marciniak, Coordinator  
MMarciniak@truenorthservices.org  
231-924-0641, ext 220

**Circles Ottawa County (Holland, MI – hosted at Holland First UMC):** Lotefa Bartlett de Villarreal, Director  
LVillarreal@goodsamministries.com  
616-392-7159

**Circles Washtenaw County (Ypsilanti, MI):** Suzanne Van Dam, Coordinator  
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