

THINKfast

organizer toolkit 2021



Development
and Peace
CARITAS CANADA

Welcome to THINKfast	3
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PART 1: Logistics

Pre-event checklist	4
Gather a THINKfast committee	5
Choose your own adventure	6
25-hour schedule (Traditional THINKfast)	7
12-hour schedule (Shorter THINKfast)	8

PART 2: Fasting

Fasting guidelines	9
Solidarity meal and celebration	10
Make it eco-friendly	11
Evaluate & stay engaged	12

PART 3: Forms & Evaluation

How to fundraise	13
Financial report	15
Donation forms	16
Participant feedback	18

Contact us

Welcome to THINKfast

Dear THINKfast Organizers,

In our busy culture of abundance, a fast is a special way to slow down and be grateful for all our blessings. As Catholics, fasting is also a key part of our faith tradition and involves our whole bodies in prayer. A fast challenges us and teaches us to be thankful for all that we have. It is a spiritual practice and is a way to join in solidarity with those are fighting hunger, poverty, or oppression.

We hope that our THINKfast toolkit becomes a go-to resource for you in your work with youth and young adults to explore issues of injustice, poverty and what we can all do to build a more just world.

As with any Development and Peace initiative, we encourage you to reach out should you need any inspiration, guidance or support in the planning of your event. While our staff may not be able to attend each and every event across Canada, we can assist with:

- > helping you adjust THINKfast to suit your group size and age range
- > answering questions about our online fundraising platform
- > finding guest speakers in your area
- > telling you more about Development and Peace and how to stay involved!

On the back cover of this toolkit, we have a Staff Directory that shows your regional contact person – don't hesitate to **get in touch** with your ideas and questions!

We hope you have as much fun planning the THINKfast as your participants will have during the event!

Stay in touch,

Your THINKfast Program Team



To start, register your THINKfast online so we can support you and your team!

Go through this guide for helpful tips for planning your event



Use the hashtag #THINKfast throughout your fast

THINKfast

Pre-event checklist



6 - 8 weeks before the fast

- Create a THINKfast committee with the support of your school or parish
- Set and confirm a date and location
- Register your THINKfast & order materials online*
- Set your fundraising goal

3-4 weeks before the fast

- Register more THINKfast participants
- Fundraise online by having participants create their personal fundraising pages at devp.org/thinkfast
- Fundraise in-person, using THINKfast Donation Forms
- Promote your event on social media
- Put up posters to invite others to fast with you or contribute

2 weeks before the fast

- Choose a sample schedule to follow
OR
- Choose your own schedule: pick your favourite games, prayers and activities at devp.org/activities
- Plan your Solidarity Meal* (see page 10)

1 week before the fast

- Optional: Send media releases and/or invitations to local newspapers, radio stations or TV stations so they can capture the fun!
- Confirm any final details



***To ensure on-time delivery, T-shirts and posters must be ordered 4-6 weeks prior to your fast date through our [online registration page](#)**

Consider inviting community members to join you in a post-fast Solidarity Meal & Celebration

Gather a THINKfast committee

While you can organize a THINKfast on your own, you'll probably find it easier to have help. Involving other leaders also helps share the responsibility and FUN of planning!

Example team structure:



Lead Organizer

- Acts as your Committee's main contact
- Registers your THINKfast event online & orders materials
- Liaises with Development and Peace staff (if needed)



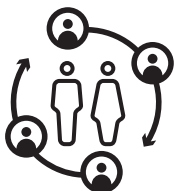
Fundraising & Admin Team

- Distributes pledge forms to participants for cash and cheque donations
- Shares fundraising ideas with participants, including how create personal fundraising pages online
- Gathers all cash and cheque donations during the fast
- Assists Lead Organizer to prepare the financial report for Development and Peace



Promotion Team

- Invites new participants to join your Event
- Promotes your event within your community



Event Volunteers (optional)

- Assist with setup, activities and tear down
- Helps resolve any unforeseen issues that come up



Note:
Committee
members can
hold more than
one role!

Choose your own adventure

THINKfast is an opportunity to learn and grow with your peers through activities, prayers, videos and presentations. We have assembled more than 80 experiential learning activities and interactive games to help you learn about global social justice issues. You'll have so much fun, you might even forget you are fasting! Visit devp.org/activities to choose the ones you'd like to use or let us know any of your favourites that aren't there already.

If you're NEW to THINKfast, we encourage you to review our sample schedules, and choose activities from among those listed on the next two pages.

If you want to explore a specific theme, feel like a challenge, or have organized THINKfasts before, you can customize your THINKfast with ANY of the activities from our Activities Database.

Feel free to customize these games for your audience, think up your own activities or add games from other places. You'll want to pick activities that best suit the personality, interests and size of your group, as well as any theme you've chosen to focus on.

THINKfast is one way we respond to our Christian call to be a light to each other and to the world. Use prayer and reflection throughout to give participants a chance to understand their experiences and to situate their learnings in our shared faith.

Suggested themes:

- Refugees and forced migration
- Climate change and water access
- Global trade and food insecurity

Types of activities:



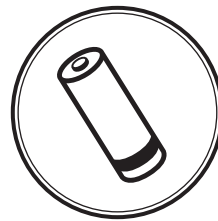
Icebreakers

Start moving and get to know each other



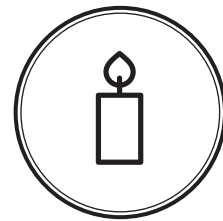
Awareness activities

Go deeper into a global social justice theme



Energizers

Re-engage the group with a brief and lively activity






Prayers and reflections

Reflect on what you've learned and pray for the transformation of inequitable structures



25-hour schedule

Traditional THINKfast

DAY 1

12:00 pm	Participants begin to fast
3:30 pm	Participants arrive at gathering place
3:45 pm	Welcome from Lead Organizer/Organizing Committee
 4:00 pm	Icebreaker, 30 minutes
4:30 pm	Reflection, Prayer & Opening Liturgy, 15 min.
4:45 pm	Juice Break
5:30 pm	Activity, 90 min.
 7:00 pm	Juice Break, 15 min.
7:15 pm	Prayer, 30 min.
7:45 pm	Activity, 45 min.
 8:30 pm	Movie Screening, 60-120 min.
10:00 pm	Brush teeth and get ready for bed // <u>Journaling Activity</u>
11:00 pm	Lights out

DAY 2

8:00 am	Juice Break
 8:15 am	Icebreaker, 15 min.
8:30 am	Prayer, 15 min.
8:45 am	Activity, 30 min.
9:15 am	Energizer, 15 min. // <u>Rainmaker</u>
9:30 am	Activity, 30 min.
10:00 am	Juice Break
10:15 am	Activity, 60 min.
 11:15 am	Initial clean-up and meal prep // Closing Liturgy, Reflection & Prayer
12:00 pm	Solidarity Meal // Feedback forms




The traditional THINKfast starts on a Friday, continues with a sleepover at the school or parish, and ends on Saturday with a shared Solidarity Meal

12-hour schedule

Shorter THINKfast


SCHOOL DAY

6:45 am	Participants begin to fast
7:00 am	Participants arrive at gathering place
 7:15 am	Welcome from Lead Organizer/Organizing Committee
7:30 am	Reflection, Prayer & Opening Liturgy, 15 min.
7:45 am	Icebreaker, 15-30 min.

Morning announcements and morning classes

Lunchtime	Activity, 60 min.
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Afternoon classes

3:30pm	Participants arrive at gathering place
3:45 pm	Activity, 30 min.
4:15 pm	Juice Break
4:30 pm	Activity, 30-60 min.
 5:30 pm	Movie Screening, 30-60 min.
6:30 pm	Reflection, prayer & closing liturgy
6:45 pm	Solidarity Meal // Feedback forms

EXPERT TIP:

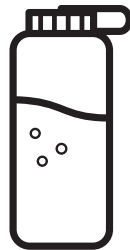
Use the hashtag **#THINKfast** throughout your fast to connect to other THINKfasters and encourage last-minute donations from friends and family!

Fasting guidelines

When organizing a fast, its best that participants know what to expect. Share this information with your whole group:

Guidelines

To fast properly we must drink fluids throughout our fast so keep filling up that reusable water bottle! Anyone older than 11 in good health can safely go without food for 25 hours. Anyone with a cold or flu, liver or kidney problems, or a serious illness should not take part in a full 25-hour fast.



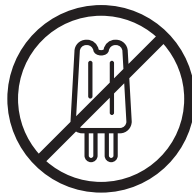
If in doubt as to a person's fitness for the fast, be sure to check with a doctor. Support inclusiveness by planning ahead and adapting your fast according to your group composition. Participants with special health requirements may need a space to store and consume specific foods.

What to Expect

As we fast, our bodies go through different stages, such as tiredness, hunger, distraction and excitement. As group leaders, it is especially important for you to pay attention to your group's energy levels and to choose activities most appropriate to their current state. Encourage the group to drink fluids throughout the day. As long as you keep your group hydrated and occupied, their feelings of tiredness, hyperactivity or hunger will be a great learning experience.

EXPERT TIPS

1. Avoid refreshments that contain heavy doses of refined sugar; they'll only make you more tired later!
2. Organize activities that require more mental energy near the beginning of the fast when everyone is more alert.



It is important to listen to what your body is telling you!



Feeling energetic?

Its a great time to do an activity. Be sure to drink lots of water!



Feeling tired?

Sit down and rest. This is a great time to write in your journal, take some personal time, or pray. Drinking natural fruit juice is a good way to bring up your energy levels.



Feeling hungry?

This is normal; drink some juice to help this pass. Experiencing the feeling of hunger is an opportunity to reflect on how lucky the average Canadian is not to feel this way for extended periods of time.



Feeling distracted?

Near the end of a longer fast, it's common to have difficulty focusing on assigned tasks. Drinking lots of liquids will help bring back focus.

Solidarity meal and celebration

Break the fast with a solidarity celebration!

Hosting a communal liturgy and meal is a great way to celebrate what you've accomplished over the 25 hours and complete your fast. If resources permit, invite your family and friends to join you for your solidarity celebration – you may also consider inviting your school principal; your parish or community representatives; local community members who support refugees and immigrants; and, of course, your donors!

Meal ideas

Pot-luck

Many of your friends and family members won't have participated in the fast, but are there to support you. Ask them to join your solidarity celebration by making and bringing in their favourite dish!

Global meal

Have teams provide traditional meals from specific regions of their choice. A great way to appreciate our diverse world is to learn what our sisters and brothers typically eat!

Country-theme

Order or create a meal that represents a country where Development and Peace has partner organizations or a region where small-scale farmers are struggling to get by.

Very veggie

Growing vegetables is easier on the land and our environment than raising cattle and other livestock – encourage plenty of vegetarian dishes as main courses and sides.

100-Mile meal

The food we eat often comes from the far reaches of our planet, passing through many hands and travelling over long roads and waterways. Before the fast, find out about community-shared agriculture projects in your area and/or make connections to local food producers and farmers. Consuming locally grown foods requires 17 times less oil and gas than a typical diet. Support local farmers and the environment by enjoying a meal that did not travel more than 100 miles (or 160 km) from farm to table!

EXPERT TIPS

Select a person to lead grace before your meal



After abstaining from food for 12-25 hours, eat slowly to give your stomach a chance to readjust



Savour each bite and take the time to be thankful for the food on the table



If your participants are making the solidarity meal themselves, have them prepare as much as possible beforehand (eg. salads, soups, chilis); participants probably won't have the patience for a long cooking session after fasting!

Make it eco-friendly



Tap into it! Instead of bottled water, drink tap water from jugs, a large thermos and reusable water bottles*



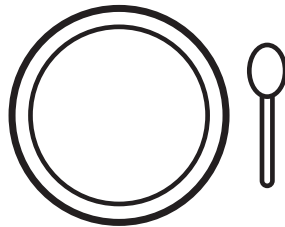
Talk to your group about taking an hour – or even the whole fast – away from personal electronics.



Reduce power consumption: consider eating by candle-light – beeswax candles are best!



To break the fast, choose local, organic and fair trade wherever possible.



Use reusable plates, cups and cutlery for your Solidarity Meal.

*Many Canadians are not aware of the harmful social and environmental effects of using plastic water bottles. Teach your participants why its important to avoid purchasing bottled water by incorporating our 30-minute Journey of Bottled Water activity into your THINKfast (download at devp.org/activities).

If you're ALREADY a Bottled Water-Free school or parish, this will provide some of the ongoing education work needed to educate Canadians about this issue.

If you're NOT in a Bottled Water-Free Zone, this can galvanise your THINKfast group to take up this campaign at their school or parish! If you'd like assistance in eliminating disposable water bottles from your school or parish ecosystem, please get in touch with us at comms@devp.org – we have lots of materials and experience to share for this ongoing campaign!



Evaluate



Want to evaluate what your participants thought of your event? Print out our Evaluation Forms on page 18 and distribute them to your group before your Solidarity Meal or just after your event. As an organizer, this will help you learn what worked for your group and what to change for next year.

Don't forget to send out a thank you to those who participated and helped plan the THINKfast.

Stay engaged

Youth are better able to understand structural injustice and international solidarity after they have completed THINKfast. Encourage participants to continue their involvement in the Development and Peace movement after they complete the fast. For opportunities to stay engaged, contact your local Development and Peace animator – you'll find their contact details on the back cover!

Would you like to see your THINKfast group featured on the cover of next year's Organizer Guide? Please also share your photos with us at comms@devp.org (and tag @DevPeace in your #THINKfast tweets and posts) – we are always looking to profile successful THINKfast events in our publications and on our website!

**“Christ has no body on earth but ours,
no hands but ours, no feet but ours.
Ours are the feet with which He is to go
about doing good.
Ours are the hands with which He is to
bless people now.”**

– St. Teresa of Avila

How to fundraise

1. Register online to create your team page

If you're the Lead Organizer, register your THINKfast at devp.org/thinkfast and invite participants to join your team online. Members of your team can create individual fundraising pages and invite friends, family and community members to help them meet their fundraising goals. Online fundraising is secure, convenient and environmentally-friendly, and allows you to watch your group progress towards their goal in real time! The behind-the-scenes administration of your THINKfast will be that much easier as well, with no cheques to keep track of and less paperwork to mail in!



2. Distribute donation forms to participants

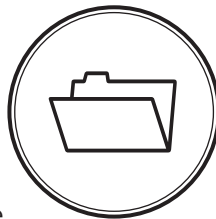
Some people still prefer to donate in-person by cash or cheque. To collect these 'physical' donations, distribute Donation Forms (pages 16-17) to participants at least 2-3 weeks before your fast. Print these two pages double-sided, so participants can use a single sheet of paper to collect and record both cash and cheque donations.



3. Gather forms & donations from participants

Before your THINKfast, remind participants to bring back their Donation Forms and donations on the day of the fast. During the event, be sure to gather all of the Donation materials that participants have used. After your THINKfast, make sure that anyone who forgot their forms and donations on the day of the fast delivers them to you as soon as possible.

Once you've gathered participant forms and donations, make a single-sided photocopy of all forms that were used, and separate them into two categories (form A and form B). You'll want to send us the photocopies and keep the original forms for your records.



Tax receipting

We can only issue tax receipts if cheques and money orders from individual donors are made out to Development and Peace. Donors must complete all the information requested on participant **Donation Forms** (full names, complete addresses and the amount of the donation).

Development and Peace will issue **tax receipts** to all those who donate more than \$10. People who donate online will receive a tax receipt automatically.

If you're sending funds raised through your **parish or diocese**, it is your parish that must issue tax receipts to donors. Development and Peace cannot issue tax receipts for cheques made out to a parish or school.

For each participant who collected CHEQUES:

- Use a paperclip to attach cheques received to the individual's photocopied paperwork ('Donation Form A | CHEQUES').
- Indicate the number of cheques received, as well as the combined value of all these cheques, on your Financial Report (found on the following page).

On behalf of everyone in the group who collected CASH,

- Tally the TOTAL value of cash donations received as a group.
- Write a cheque (or money order) for the combined value of all the cash donations received as a group. Address your school, parish or personal cheque (or money order) to Development and Peace and write THINKfast and the name of your group in the memo line.
- Attach all photocopied CASH donations forms (Form B) - to your cheque (or money order) - with a paperclip.
- Add the cheque number (or money order number) to your Financial Report as well as its value.
- Please do not send any cash by mail!



4. Mail us your paperwork within four weeks

Include your Financial Report, Donation Forms and cheques/money orders in one envelope and send to:

THINKfast
c/o Development and Peace
1425 René-Lévesque Blvd. West, 3rd floor
Montréal, Québec H3G 1T7

Remember to submit your Financial Report and receipting within four weeks of your THINKfast.

Cheques cannot be deposited if they are stale-dated (i.e. dated more than six months earlier) – so please make sure that you send in your Financial Report, Donation Forms and cheques to us as soon as possible after your fast.

As Lead Organizer, complete this form and include it with participant forms and donations.

Your name _____ Date of your group's THINKfast _____

Your email _____

Your school/university/parish name and address _____

Address _____

City/Town _____ Province _____ Diocese _____ Postal code _____

Form A Cheques	Number of cheques received: _____ Total funds received by cheque: \$ _____
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Form B Cash donations	Cheque or money order number: _____ Total of all cash donations: \$ _____
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TOTAL FUNDS RAISED: \$ _____

Please send completed forms and donations to:

Development and Peace
1425 René-Lévesque Blvd West, 3rd Floor
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1T7

Participant's name (please print clearly)

School/Parish

Tax receipts will be issued for donations of \$10 or more if information is complete and legible
Please make cheques payable to: Development and Peace

First and last name (please print clearly)

Email

Telephone

Address

City

Province

Postal code

\$

Cheque number

Donation amount

Subscribe to newsletter

First and last name (please print clearly)

Email

Telephone

Address

City

Province

Postal code

\$

Cheque number

Donation amount

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Address

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\$

Donation amount

Subscribe to newsletter

Participant feedback

What were your favourite parts of THINKfast?

What could be improved for next time?

Would you do THINKfast again? Why or why not?

Stay in touch!

Development and Peace staff can connect you with social justice-minded young people across Canada!

D&P Youth are engaged with our movement through university and student groups, the D&P youth council, and as parish representatives.

If there's no group where you are, we can help you start your own!



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