



**ELCA World Hunger**  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
God's work. Our hands.

### ***King Corn, 2007 (90 minutes)***

Two recent college graduates move to a rural farming community in Iowa and work with local farmers to grow one acre of corn using conventional farming methods. Their intent is to trace their corn from farming to end use, but they find that is impossible given the current food production system. The filmmakers embark on a journey through this food system and shed light on farm subsidies, genetically modified seeds, the farm program and modern-day farming. After watching this film, you might find yourself reading food labels in search of the ubiquitous high fructose corn syrup or other corn products that you never imagined would make their way into your diet.

### **Questions for Reflection**

These questions are intended to be open-ended with no right answer. Allow for thoughtful silences and encourage friendly dialogue. The questions are in no particular order; select those that seem most relevant to the group (feel free to add your own, too!).

- 1) Prior to watching this film, how aware were you of the prevalence of corn in your diet?
- 2) How far removed is your family from farming? How do the “good old days” reflected in farm stories in your family contrast with modern commodity farming realities?
- 3) We have a tendency to view farmers as rugged individualists who are out working the land and growing food for our country. What do you think about this assessment? How close are your perceptions to the realities the filmmakers encountered with Iowa corn farmers?
- 4) What have been some of the unintended consequences of farm consolidation in the U.S.? How do these relate to hunger?
- 5) The main characters in the film apparently thought they were growing sweet corn to eat, but learned they were instead growing low-grade corn to be fed to animals, exported, turned into ethanol or processed into high fructose corn syrup. Did this surprise you?
- 6) What are some of the injustices you see in the U.S. food production system? How are the farmers trapped by this system? Who else is being harmed by this system?
- 7) Will you change your eating habits after what you've seen in this film? How? Why?
- 8) How could your church influence the eating habits of the adults and children it serves in its ministries? What are some of the challenges of changing eating habits, particularly at church?

## **Other Resources**

If this film and the issues of food production grabbed your interest, you may want to check out the following resources:

ELCA World Hunger, "Food and Hunger Toolkit." Available online at [www.elca.org/hunger/toolkits](http://www.elca.org/hunger/toolkits).

The film, *Food, Inc.* (Robert Kenner, 2009). Available on DVD. Companion study guide edited by Karl Weber, *Food, Inc.* (New York: Participant Media, 2009).

The film, *SuperSize Me* (Morgan Spurlock, 2004). Available on DVD.

Bread for the World Institute, *2007 Hunger Report*. An in-depth exploration of issues farmers face in the United States.

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (New York: Penguin, 2006).

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All American Meal* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2004).