

# What to Expect

Your standing order, if on file with Week of Compassion, will be mailed sometime between mid-December and early January. Please check your order to make sure you have the materials you ordered and need. If you need additional materials or have questions about your order, please contact:

Elaine Cleveland, Week of Compassion  
P.O. Box 1986  
Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Phone: 317.713.2442  
Fax: 317.713.2588  
E-mail: [ecleveland@woc.disciples.org](mailto:ecleveland@woc.disciples.org)

Your standing order should include:

- 2008 theme posters
- 2008 bulletin inserts
- WOC offering envelopes
- Giving boxes
- 2008 Children's Resource

## Additional WOC Resources (There is no charge for WOC resources.)

### 2008 Planning and Resource Guide

Please share this guide with outreach leaders and others responsible for your congregation's Week of Compassion special offering. Additional copies are available upon request or can be downloaded from the WOC website. (Photocopy-friendly)

### Daily Devotional Online

Revd Amy Lignitz-Harken, senior minister at FCC, Independence, MO, has written a truly inspiring daily prayer devotional for use during the WOC observance. Find it online at [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org).

### Also Online. . .

Find this Planning and Resource Guide, as well as reports, resources, stories & photos, links to partner sites, and much more when you visit [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org).

### Week of Compassion Map/Poster

A 36"x 48" interactive map/poster to help keep members informed and updated about Disciples' work and witness in the world through WOC. (One complimentary copy per congregation)

### 'In the Eye of the Recovery'

Week of Compassion's DVD about hurricane recovery in the Gulf. (7:45 minutes)

### 'Touch the World: Touch Sudan'

A DVD from the National Council of Churches of Christ offering individuals or small groups insight into the current situation in Sudan. (30:19 minutes)

### 'Sowing Seeds to Fight Hunger in Africa'

A DVD from WOC partner, Seed Programs, Inc. This organization works to enable

impoverished communities in developing countries to grow some of their own food. (10:00 minutes)

### Making Poverty History

Skits, simulations and worship resources around the issues of poverty & hunger. Useful for CROP Walk teams, youth groups, women's groups, etc. Call Church World Service at 800.297.1516 to order.

### 'We Change the World' Music Video

A music video by gospel recording artist, Babbie Mason. Perfect as an introduction to the WOC offering at a fellowship dinner or during worship. Available in VHS only, while supply lasts. (4:30 minutes)

### Week of Compassion Placemats

A colorful addition to your WOC fellowship meal or church dinner for any occasion. Available in multiples of 50.

### Hunger No More: Hunger in the World

A thorough study resource of world hunger from Bread for the World. Suitable for adult and older youth study groups. (One complimentary packet while supply lasts)

### A Fast That Lasts

The resource for Disciples junior/senior high school youth who want to take a serious look at world hunger and do something about it. (One complimentary copy available for each congregation; photocopy-friendly)

### Children's Stickers

Draw a picture or write a story using a set of 12 colorful stickers. (While supply lasts)

Using the same old materials of earth, air, fire, and water, every twenty-four hours God creates something new out of them. If you think you're seeing the same show all over again seven times a week, you're crazy. Every morning you wake up to something that in all eternity never was before and never will be again. And the you that wakes up was never the same before and will never be the same either.

— Frederick Buechner,  
**Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC**

# How to Plan Your Promotion

## I. Preparation

- \_\_\_ Gather your committee.
- \_\_\_ Review your materials, including this Planning and Resource Guide and your standing order materials, as well as other WOC resources. If additional materials are needed, contact the WOC office right away:  
Elaine Cleveland, WOC, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206  
Phone: 317.713.2442, Fax: 317.713.2588, E-mail: [ecleveland@woc.disciples.org](mailto:ecleveland@woc.disciples.org)
- \_\_\_ Visit the WOC website to familiarize yourself with additional materials:  
[www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org)

## II. Challenge

- \_\_\_ Review your congregation's history of giving to Week of Compassion.
- \_\_\_ Set your goal — consider adding 10% to your largest WOC offering in the last five years. Or suggest a minimum goal (\$25 for example) per household.
- \_\_\_ Keep the congregation informed of its progress toward the goal.

## III. Promotion

- \_\_\_ Let the congregation know about your Week of Compassion observance well in advance of the offering dates, which are February 17-24, 2008.
- \_\_\_ Display the WOC Map and/or posters in high traffic areas throughout your facilities.
- \_\_\_ Prepare articles for your church newsletter in the weeks before the offering is taken. Send a letter (and offering envelope) to members and friends (sample is in this Planning and Resource Guide, page 5) inviting them to participate in the offering.
- \_\_\_ Check the WOC website for regular updates and share them with your congregation.
- \_\_\_ Create a special Week of Compassion display in the narthex or other place of high visibility.
- \_\_\_ Plan special events to raise your congregation's awareness of Week of Compassion.
- \_\_\_ Invite church members who have had work-trip experience supported by WOC to speak about Week of Compassion's ministry.
- \_\_\_ Invite a special speaker or create a special program to be part of your worship or an outreach dinner. Contact the WOC office for additional names and resources.
- \_\_\_ Plan a regional WOC event.

## IV. Proclamation

- \_\_\_ Use (adapt as needed) worship and liturgical resources, found on pages 6-11 in this Planning and Resource Guide.
- \_\_\_ Include "Moments for Mission" in Sunday worship services.
- \_\_\_ Thank the congregation for sharing.
- \_\_\_ Thank the various people who participated in planning and carrying out the WOC observance.
- \_\_\_ Give God thanks for the many ministries of caring, hope and service Week of Compassion supports on behalf of your congregation and all Disciples in the United States and Canada in the name of Jesus Christ.

## V. Conclusion

- \_\_\_ Announce the total, give thanks for and consecrate the WOC offering during worship. Ask God's blessings upon these gifts, that they might truly bring help and hope to hurting people throughout the world.
- \_\_\_ Thank the congregation again for sharing.
- \_\_\_ Share any special ideas or activities that worked well with the Week of Compassion office. We'll share them with others.
- \_\_\_ Continue to read and post WOC Updates throughout the year to remind your congregation of how WOC works around the world, around the year. **You can join the WOC Update listserv from the WOC website: [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org).** And, in your church newsletter, encourage members to join the listserv as well.

Help us both to share our resources with those who have little and to receive with humility the gifts they bring to us.

— Kate Compston,  
England, 1990

# Letter from Offering Coordinator/ Pastor to Congregation

## Dear Friends:

The call to give comes regularly in church life: annual stewardship drives and capital campaigns, work trips to the Gulf South or another hurting place, special holiday events, youth mission trips and local projects. Each giving opportunity challenges us anew to comprehend the importance of all of our participation, and to see past numbers and amounts to the practice of praise inherent in the act of giving.

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have,” says the writer of Hebrews to the community of faith. The call was personal, a reminder that our **actions** as Christians speak more loudly than our words and worship services. God desires our participation in the lives of others, an expectation made even more pointedly by Jesus when he tells his followers, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.” (Matt 25:40, NRSV)

Of course, the ‘least of these’ don’t just live in our community anymore. As our world grows smaller, our lives intersect with so many more lives than they once did — and God’s call to share what we have encompasses more people. The people fleeing violence in Sudan, suffering from AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, reeling from devastation in Indonesia, starving in poverty in India — we are called to make a difference in these lives, too. And Week of Compassion makes that possible.

Gifts to Week of Compassion support programs that help families and villages around the world build lives and communities that are healthy, safe and sustainable, changing the lives of millions of God’s children. Accomplished by individual denominations alongside Church World Service, work made possible by Week of Compassion

- helps rebuild communities ravaged by natural disasters
- creates sustainable sources of income for rural villages
- provides micro-credit to women to start poverty-alleviating businesses
- teaches trades and job skills to people maimed by landmines
- offers children a chance to survive past the age of 5 and go to school
- and much more.

Week of Compassion gives each of us an opportunity to respond to God’s call: to share what we have, showing the kindness, compassion and mercy of Jesus in every part of the globe.

Doing good and sharing what we have gladdens the heart of God, who promises that those who respond, “shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” (Isa 58:11, NRSV) By participating in Week of Compassion, we can experience the joy of showing and sharing God’s love — offering a hand to that stranger in need, and making a difference in the lives of God’s children around the world.

Yours in Christ,

Offering Coordinator/Pastor

There is an interesting and sweet momentum building among us: more and more everyday and ordinary . . . people are coming to the conclusion that THEY have been called by God to reach out to others and share something beautiful with the world.

— James Lumsden,  
Rincon UCC, Tucson, AZ

# Worship Resources

## LITURGY 1: Choosing Good

### Call to Worship

Leader Come, worship in community —  
People **The community of the saints.**  
Leader Saints?  
People **Yes, saints! Called by God, in covenant with God,**  
Leader a consecrated people,  
People **living God's love in the world,**  
Leader demonstrating that love in practical service.  
All **Come. Let us worship with hearts and praise and service.**

### Opening Prayer

Our hearts come heavy with concerns for our own family members and friends, and for those far from us who also greatly need your presence and who need our help. Our hearts come joyous with your love and concern for us, and joyous with the good we have done this week in keeping with your will. We come to you, O God, in many conditions. We come to worship you. Amen.

### Prayer of Confession

Leader O God, the enormity of what we have done,  
People **the enormity of what you have asked us to do that we have not done,**  
Leader the seriousness of our sins,  
People **the consequences to others of our disobedience,**  
Leader weigh heavily on our hearts.  
(Pause for silent reflection)  
Leader We ask your forgiveness,  
People **your grace and mercy.**  
Leader We ask for a turning of heart,  
People **a turning to you and a cleansing of our hearts and spirits.**  
All **We humbly and earnestly ask your forgiveness, O God.**

### Words of Assurance

Leader God is a God of justice and high expectations, yes; and yet also a God of compassion and understanding. Understanding ourselves now to be forgiven by God — each of us forgiven to the depths of our being! — let us reach out to the world with compassion and understanding and choose to bring news of God's grace to the world.

### Litany (adapted from Hebrews 13)

Leader God has said,  
People **"I will never leave you or forsake you."**  
Leader So we can say,  
People **with confidence!,**  
All **"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can anyone do to me?"**  
Leader Thus made bold by God's love,  
People **We will be God's servants in the world.**  
Leader Let mutual love continue:  
People **Show hospitality to strangers.**  
Leader Do good.  
People **And share what you have.**  
All **For such sacrifices are pleasing to God.**

### Invitation to the Offering

"For God so loved the world, that God gave God's only begotten Son." Being part of that world, and feeling that amazing love, we choose to respond with gifts of our own, gifts of love for the world.

I can never teach your children  
everything they need to know.  
But I can teach them to be  
curious and discontent.

— Marva Nettle Collins,  
quoted by Brian Lanker,  
in *I Dream a World: Portraits of Black  
Women Who Changed America*

# Worship Resources

## Dedicatory Prayer

Through these gifts, O loving God, we can go where we cannot travel. We can witness where our voices cannot be heard. We can speak in languages that we have never learned. We can love those whom we have never seen. So, bless your realm through our love, represented by our gifts now dedicated to you. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

## Charge and Benediction

Let us go now as Spirit-led servants and disciples, powerful in doing God's will, energetic in extending the love of Christ. Choose to be builders of justice and agents of God's hospitality for all. Amen.

## SERMON OUTLINE 1

### Theme: Choosing the Good We'll Do

### Scripture: Hebrews 13:1-2, 5-6, 16 (NRSV)

Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid;

What can anyone do to me?"

Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

### Concept

"Let mutual love continue. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have." Christians are oriented to doing good and to showing love. We energetically care for shut-ins, cook bereavement meals for grieving families, volunteer in our children's schools and youth groups, provide helping hands in domestic violence shelters and soup kitchens, write letters to our legislators, send mission teams out to build homes and teach Bible schools. Sometimes there is so much good we want to do, so many opportunities for doing good, that we are stymied about **which** good thing to do. Like a deer caught in the headlights, we stand still, unsure which option to pursue. Perhaps that is why the writer in Hebrews prods us back into action, back into what our hearts desire, by reminding us, "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have."

Jesus understood the human condition and gives us another chance when we neglect to do good. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he instructed his disciples to keep awake while he wrestled deeply in prayer. He needed their active presence. But, he came back from praying to find them fast asleep. He woke them, commenting, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." (Mark 14:32-38) Jesus understands that sometimes we don't carry through with what we really want to do. Jesus gave the disciples another chance to be present with him in his suffering.

So Jesus gives us another chance to be present with him, in the lives of his brothers and sisters of today. Each year we take the Week of Compassion offering. Annually, we are given the chance to be present with God's children, to share God's concern for them by getting them the help they urgently need. As God has given us multiple "other chances," so we help others have another chance for a healthy, educated, positive life. And why do we choose to give to Week of Compassion, when a number of organizations address disaster relief, worldwide poverty, hunger, and development? Because through Week of Compassion, we send our help specifically in Jesus' name. We share not only the material goods that people need to sustain life, but enrich those lives because the recipients know the help comes from the Church. What a reminder that they are not alone, that "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid!" (Hebrews 13:6)

The difference between what we do and what we are capable of doing would suffice to solve most of the world's problems.

— Mohandas Gandhi

# Worship Resources

## CHILDREN'S SERMON 1: Water

### Supplies

Pictures from this year's Week of Compassion offering posters of a water tap in a field, a young girl drinking from a cup, and a smiling man carrying grain over his shoulder.

### Outline

- Ask the children to describe water. What does it feel like? What does it taste like?
- What are your favorite things to do with water? (jump in puddles, go swimming, take a bath, go fishing or boating, splash a friend or sibling, drink it, make watercolors for painting, run through the rain or a sprinkler, etc.)
- What does your family use water for? (irrigating crops, washing vehicles, watering the lawn, water for pet fish or other animals, flushing toilets, washing dishes and clothes, cooking, etc.)
- Water is so important and necessary to life that Jesus described relationship with God as "living water"! The church uses water in baptism, as a sign of that person's becoming a Christian.
- Show the picture of the water tap in a field. Some places in the world have very little water, or the water they do have is polluted and cannot be used. How would your life be different if you didn't have water?
- Explain that the Week of Compassion offering will help people get clean, good water — by digging wells, providing containers for hauling and storing water, and distributing water purification tablets.
- Show the picture of the girl drinking from a cup and the man smiling broadly while carrying a bundle of grain. Explain that their villages got water because of money given to Week of Compassion. By giving to the offering, we can share God's love with people and concern about them and help them get the water they need.
- Close with prayer: Thank you, God, for water and for being the "living water" that gives us life. May people in need know how much we love you and how concerned we are about them as the offering we give to Week of Compassion brings them water and the other basics of life that they don't have. Amen.

## LITURGY 2 (with communion): Like a Spring

### Call to Worship

- Leader Holy God, we come to worship.  
People **We delight in drawing near to you.**  
Leader We bring offerings of praise.  
People **We long to please you.**  
Leader Make our sacrifices acceptable in your sight.  
All **Show us the way you would have us go.**

### Opening Prayer

Holy and gracious God, we welcome this new day and this hour — a moment to refresh our spirits in your house and at your table, an hour to celebrate your love and generosity to us. Open our hearts and our ears, that we may hear your message for our lives. Open our eyes and our lives, so that we may better reflect you in the world beyond these walls. Amen.

### Prayer of Confession

- Leader Loving and patient God, we come to you with troubled hearts.  
People **We've quarreled and blamed and sought advantage over others.**  
Leader Our consciences are guilty, too.  
People **We've treated others unfairly and neglected to do good.**  
Leader Our hands aren't so clean, either.  
People **We have held tightly to our resources and failed to share our blessings.**

Colorful Creator, God of  
mystery,  
Thank you for the artists  
teaching us to see  
Glimpses of the meaning of the  
commonplace,  
Visions of the holy in each  
human face.  
God of truth and beauty, Poet  
of the Word  
May we be creators by the  
Spirit stirred,  
Open to your presence in our  
joy and strife,  
Vessels of the holy coursing  
through our life.

— Ruth Duck

# Worship Resources

Leader We have forgotten whose we are, and who we represent.  
All **Grant us the blessing of forgiveness and the grace to move forward on a new and righteous path.**

## Words of Assurance

Leader Children of God! You shall call and God will answer!  
People **We are forgiven. A new path awaits!**  
Leader Listen for the voice of God, for God will guide you continually.  
All **We will listen. We will follow.**

## Litany

Leader We've been busy at worship, Bible study, and church meetings.  
People **But is this the sacrifice that God desires?**  
Leader Then what is the right thing to do? How should we praise God?  
People **Get rid of unfair practices! Fight for the oppressed! Cancel debts!**  
Leader But we obey the letter of the law.  
People **Do you share your food with the hungry? Open your home to the homeless? Help someone pay their electric bill?**  
Leader But I put something in the plate each Sunday...  
People **Be generous with those in need. Speak out on their behalf. Take action to reflect God in the world.**  
Leader And that will please God?  
All **Then your light shall break forth like the dawn. You shall be like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.**

## Invitation to Communion

As we prepare to approach Christ's table, to share in the feast of the people of God, let us stop for a moment to remember other feasts Jesus celebrated —

- the feast at the wedding in Cana, where Jesus turned water not only into wine, but into the **best** wine offered by the host
- the feast of the loaves and fishes, where a few shared and all went away full
- the meal from wheat gleaned on the Sabbath; the festive dinner in the home of Lazarus, Mary and Martha; the breakfast on the shore of the Galilee after his resurrection

When Jesus was around, no one went hungry. So, as we remember the feast in the Upper Room, let us also remember our responsibility to act on behalf of the one who died for us — the one who calls us to go into the world to heal the sick, house the homeless, feed the poor, and fight for release of the oppressed.

## Communion prayer

Gracious God, you have been generous to us. Even when we suffer and feel stretched, we know we are far better off than many who share this world with us. Give us hearts so full with remembrance of your blessings that they spill over in the desire to share our bounty. Help us remember more often our abundance than our lack, and open our eyes to those who need our kindness. Let this feast nourish us to be Christ in the world.

## Invitation to the Offering

A spring of water, whose waters never fail, gives freely — bubbling over in its abundance and knowledge that God's gifts will never run dry. In the spirit of that spring, let us bring our offerings — giving not just out of our own excess, but out of our first fruits. Let us return our gifts to the source, who promises to bless and multiply them to enable us to bring help and healing to a hurting world.

Christ didn't open up soup kitchens to feed the poor; he ate with them.

— William Burnett

# Worship Resources

## Dedicatory Prayer

Generous and loving God, we thank you for the resources you have entrusted to us, and we return to you a portion of those gifts to further your work in the world. Join our gifts with others, bless and multiply them, so that all of your children may live in health and safety, rejoicing in each new day and sharing what they have to make our world look more like the world you desire.

## Charge and Benediction

Jesus has left the building! Follow him into the world, bringing light where there is darkness, offering water where there is thirst, serving food where there is hunger, struggling for freedom where there is oppression. Rejoice in your blessings, and do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.

## SERMON OUTLINE 2

**Theme: WWGD — What Would God Do?**

**Scripture: Isaiah 58:1-12 (NRSV)**

Shout out, do not hold back! Lift up your voice like a trumpet! Announce to my people their rebellion, to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet day after day they seek me and delight to know my ways, as if they were a nation that practiced righteousness and did not forsake the ordinance of their God; they ask of me righteous judgments, they delight to draw near to God.

“Why do we fast, but you do not see? Why humble ourselves, but you do not notice?” Look, you serve your own interest on your fast day, and oppress all your workers. Look, you fast only to quarrel and to fight and to strike with a wicked fist. Such fasting as you do today will not make your voice heard on high. Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin?

Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly; your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer; you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am. If you remove the yoke from among you, the pointing of the finger, the speaking of evil, if you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail. Your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt; you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. Note: **The Message** offers a helpful interpretation/translation of this passage.

## Concept

Despite the ancient similes, this passage rings with a powerfully relevant message. The prophet reminds us how we go to church and seek God’s blessing, yet we fail to fight against the injustice we see, hear or read about every day. The prophet cries out that the honor and sacrifice God desires is not sackcloth-and-ashes, but a life of action: fighting on behalf of the oppressed, feeding the hungry, helping the poor.

And God honors that action. In the beautiful passage of reward, God promises help to the giver. But perhaps even more compelling is the change God grants **in** the giver. S/he will become a beaming bearer of light, a nourished and nourishing garden, a spring of life-giving water ‘whose waters never fail.’

Doing good and sharing what we have must be more than a Christian “task” if we are to please the God we worship. Only in a life of action on behalf of others can we reflect our God in the world — a reflection that delights God far more than all the words our lips can utter.

The God we serve is a God of abundance. That’s how the world was created. We must step out in faith to believe that there **is** more than enough.

— Dr. Sharon E. Watkins

# Worship Resources

## CHILDREN'S SERMON 2: Acts of Kindness

### Supplies

Bible passage and Aesop's fable (see below), coin, Week of Compassion Coin Box

### Outline

- Welcome the children and read Hebrews 13:16a — “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.”
- Ask the children what the Bible verse means to them. Do they think they're too small to make someone else's life better by doing kind things and sharing what they have?
- Read the Aesop's fable, **The Lion and the Mouse** (adapted) —  
Once upon a time, a Lion was sleeping when a little Mouse began running up and down all over him. The Lion soon woke up, reached out his huge paw, and grabbed the Mouse. Just as the Lion opened his big jaws to swallow him, the Mouse cried out, “Pardon me, powerful one! Please forgive me for disturbing you. If you will be kind to me, I will never forget it. And one day, I may be able to do something for you.”  
The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him that he opened up his paw and let the Mouse go. A few weeks later, the Lion was caught in a trap. The hunters who had caught him wanted to take him alive to the King, so they had tied the Lion to a tree while they went to look for a wagon. Just then, the little Mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the Lion's sad situation, went up to the ropes and soon gnawed right through them, freeing the King of the Beasts.  
“I was right,” said the little Mouse. “No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.”
- Show the children a coin, and talk about how “little” the coin is. Then explain how putting a little coin in the Coin Box (which they should have received in Sunday School) each day can add up to lots of “little” acts of sharing and kindness. And when everyone's gifts are combined and given to Week of Compassion, we can make a big difference in the world.
- Describe some of the brief stories of the ways Week of Compassion helps people. (Visit [www.weekofcompassion.org](http://www.weekofcompassion.org) if you need more ideas, stories, and photos.)
- Close with a prayer, thanking God for our little hands that can make a big difference in the world through small acts of sharing and kindness.

### Other Story Options

#### God's Incredible Creatures: The Gift of Sharing, Heather Soleim

Sammy the squirrel has found the largest acorn ever, and he doesn't want to share it. On his quest to hide the acorn, he meets a few of God's incredible creatures. Each one seems to have a special gift and soon Sammy learns that he, too, has gifts and discovers the gift of sharing.

#### The Kindness Quilt, Nancy Elizabeth Wallace

Minna (a young rabbit) and her class read Aesop's **The Lion and the Mouse** in class. The teacher asks the class to perform an act of kindness, then draw a picture of it to share with the class. Because she performs many acts of kindness, Minna cannot decide which to illustrate — so she creates a quilt of pictures. Her classmates add their pictures to the quilt, and soon the whole school gets involved and the quilt moves into the hallway, where it covers a wall with many acts of kindness.

If Jesus could transform  
common water into wedding  
wine  
Spit and dirt into new sights  
Troubled sea into a pathway  
Well water into living water  
Could Christ transform the  
waters of my life  
shallow  
murky  
polluted  
stagnant  
sour  
Into a shower of blessing?

— Tom Lane

# Interactive Educational Materials

## INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY: Hospitality for Refugees

### Objective

To capture a glimpse of life in a refugee tent, and to gain an experiential understanding of the emergency hospitality provided in crises thanks to Week of Compassion

### Supplies

Measuring tape

Masking tape, chalk or string and anchoring items (bricks, books, stones)

Water jugs (empty milk jugs will work)

Optional: blankets, cooking pots

Question page

### Pre-Event Preparation

Before the group gathers, mark off on the floor (using masking tape, chalk, or string anchored by bricks to outline the area, or by using books or stones to mark the corners) several 13' x 13' squares, representing the size of a typical refugee tent for a family of eight. Make one square for each eight participants you expect. (A typical tent size for a family of six is 13' by 10'.)

### Gathering the Group

Note: If feasible, begin the activity outdoors so participants can experience the effects of weather and being outside.

1. Welcome the group.
2. Ask them to imagine they live in an area that has been hit by a devastating earthquake and its aftershocks. It may be very cold and snowy, or it might be blazingly hot. The buildings in the village have been destroyed. You have been living outside for five days because what was once your home is now a heap of rubble. It is like that for all your neighbors, too.
3. Ask the group to talk about
  - what challenges you face living outside
  - what you miss about having a home to live in
4. Explain that our gifts to Week of Compassion help provide hospitality to people experiencing a crisis or emergency, who are too far away to welcome into our own homes. Through Week of Compassion, tents arrive for you and your neighbors, plus clean water, food, and medical supplies.

### Group Activity

1. Form as many groups of eight or almost eight as you can from those willing to participate, creating groups of various ages, if possible:
  - two people, age 55+, to represent the grandparent/respected elder generation
  - two people, 22 – 55 years old, to represent the parent generation
  - two teens
  - two younger children
2. Invite each group to go inside and “move into” one of the squares outlined on the floor. This is the tent they will share as a refugee family! Hand each “family” a copy of the questions below and allow them ten to fifteen minutes to work as a small group.
  - At last, a place out of the snow and rain (or the blazing hot sun)! Decide where everyone will sleep. How will everyone fit? (If physically possible, have everyone lie down to try it out.)
  - How will you use the space for normal daily activities, like
    - playing and working
    - storage (You may have lost almost everything, but consider where to put blankets, cooking utensils, water containers, and personal items retrieved from your old home.)
    - food preparation and eating
    - bathing and toileting

It is not customary that an intelligent person clothes and cares for one part of his body and leaves the rest naked. The intelligent person is solicitous for all his members. Thus it should be with those who are the Lord's church and body. All those born of God are called into one body and are prepared by love to serve their neighbors.

# Interactive Educational Materials

- Will some activities usually done indoors need to be moved outdoors?
- Will you allow animals in your tent (a dog, perhaps, or even goats, chickens, or sheep)? If yes, how will you live with them? If not, how will you safeguard them?
- What will you do when you want privacy or time to be alone?

3. Re-gather as a large group and talk through the decisions various “families” made as they answered the questions. Ask the whole group how, despite its challenges, living in a tent is better than living in the open. Remind participants that through Week of Compassion, we help families begin to recover from earthquakes and war. Although they may live so far away we cannot welcome them into our own homes to offer shelter and hospitality, through Week of Compassion, we provide them a much-welcomed temporary home of their own.

4. Close with prayer: We are grateful for our own homes, O God. Home is one of the greatest blessings we know. We are grateful that, through Week of Compassion, we help bring the blessing of housing and shelter to families who very much need it. We lift them and their other needs up to you in prayer. And most of all we thank you for being our Home and for being Home to those who may not have a physical house. Thank you. Amen.

Note: Dimensions, pictures, and information about various refugee tents can be found on the website of H. Sheikh Noor-ud-Din & Sons, [www.dinsons.com](http://www.dinsons.com).

## DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION

### Objective

To help connect scriptural imperatives with the work accomplished through Week of Compassion

### Preparation

The script below can be used in various settings — during a worship service, a youth meeting, an intergenerational gathering. Since little movement and few props are used during readers theater, most of the meaning is conveyed through the oral expression of the four readers. They do not need to memorize their lines since they read from a script in hand during the performance.

“Reader” sits center stage, closest to the congregation. “Heart for the World” and “Heart for God” stand about 6’ behind and to either side of “Reader,” forming a V-shape. “Narrator” stands off to one side, perhaps behind a lectern.

“Reader” has in his/her lap a large Bible that can easily stay open without the pages flipping. “Heart for the World” might wear a very large red paper heart-shape pinned to his/her front, with a representation of the world taped on it, perhaps a picture of earth taken from space or a color map of the continents. “Heart for God” wears a similar red heart but with a cross or other suitable symbol for God on it.

### The Script

**Narrator:** “Reader” is hurriedly preparing to read the Scripture for worship service. Reader’s heart is in the right place, but, like many of us, s/he is often confused by what the Bible has to say. But God speaks through the Word to this day. “Heart for God” [point out that character] voices the desire to follow God. “Heart for the World” [point to that character] voices the desire to contribute to the world.

**Reader:** I need to practice that scripture I’m reading today during the worship service. I want to read it like I really understand what it’s saying. But, Isaiah? I hope it doesn’t have a lot of hard-to-pronounce names in it! I’m glad I get a chance to contribute to the service, but it’s kind of scary, too. I wish I’d gotten the Hebrews passage. It was really short and simple: “Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have.” Well, maybe that isn’t so simple. What is “doing good”? A zillion, million, impossible things, I think. But maybe Isaiah will help explain. [Flip through the Bible.] Where is Isaiah, anyway? [Locate the actual passage, Isaiah 58, beginning with verse 6.] Oh, here it is.

Blessed are we all who look beyond our own comfort to those with little or none. Blessed are we all who risk working for peace, justice, and opportunity by speaking truth to power and by living a transformed life. Blessed are we all who live the faith and invite others into the community of faith, who give of resources in the confidence that it matters. Blessed are we all who live with humor, humility, and hope.

— Dennis Alger,  
Estacada UCC, Oregon

# Interactive Educational Materials

## DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION (continued)

**Heart for God:** God is calling you.

**Reader:** [looking up and around quickly] What?

**Heart for God:** God is calling you.

**Reader:** [sounding a bit shaky] I thought I heard someone say, "God is calling you." Calling me to what? [shakes head as if to clear it] I better get down to business. [looking back down at the Bible] Verse 6: "Is not this the fast that I choose. . ."

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to worship, with body, mind, and spirit.

**Reader:** "Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice. . ."

**Heart for the World:** Poverty is bondage. Oppression is bondage. You can help to bring justice.

**Reader:** ". . .to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke. . ."

**Heart for the World:** You can help to free the oppressed.

**Reader:** ". . .to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke."

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to worship that frees the oppressed.

**Reader:** Wow. The worship that God wants is to bring justice and free the oppressed? That sounds like something you do down at a courthouse or a refugee camp. What does that have to do with sitting in church?

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to worship. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .that frees the oppressed.

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to give what you have to God. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .to change the lives of others.

**Heart for God:** Worship. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .that changes lives. . .

**Heart for God:** . . .will bring you closer to God, here in your church. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .whether or not you can go to the camps and courthouses yourself.

**Reader:** What else is in here? Verse 7: "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry. . ."

**Heart for the World:** Hungry people need you. Famine in Asia, homeless people in your own town.

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to give. Sharing with the hungry is an answer to God's call.

**Reader:** ". . .and bring the homeless poor into your house." I don't know about that. Sometimes I get scared a little by some of the "street people." And what about the safety of my family if I bring the homeless poor into my house?

**Heart for God:** Well, I believe God is calling you to bring the homeless poor into your heart and then, perhaps, into your home.

**Reader:** Into my heart? [wonderingly] What if I brought the homeless poor into my heart? What would I do differently?

**Heart for the World:** You can help a woman without an income, a child without a home.

**Reader:** Hmmm. "Bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them."

**Heart for the World:** When you see people who have lost everything. . .

**Heart for God:** . . .God is calling you. . .

We clutch our tiny bits of faith  
in tight fists  
Shoved firmly in our pockets.  
We clutch it suspiciously, so  
unwilling to let it go –  
we don't want to lose it.  
We clutch it fearing that once  
it is spent,  
We will be without hope,  
Cast adrift, out of luck.  
Help us loosen our grip.  
Help us to pull our hands out  
of our pockets.  
Help us to uncurl fingers  
stiffened over time.  
To grow,  
To shimmer,  
To pulse,  
To explode into the air like  
a thousand red birds.

— Phil Porter

# Interactive Educational Materials

**Reader:** “. . .to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin.” It’s so easy to shut out the pictures on the TV of all those poor, starving people in Africa and elsewhere, to ignore the street people I pass, to shut down the thoughts of “What do I do to help?” But I guess that is a kind of hiding.

**Heart for the World:** All the world’s people are your kin. You can make a difference.

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to love the world with God’s own heart.

**Reader:** There is so much suffering in the world. I want to do my part! But just thinking about how complex and big the problems are makes me feel blue. I want to do what God calls me to do, but it seems so little, like I can’t make a real difference.

**Heart for the World:** It’s about giving.

**Heart for God:** And it’s about receiving.

**Reader:** Say what? Receiving? I don’t get that.

**Heart for the World:** What does your text say next?

**Reader:** The text? Oh, I almost forgot. Verse 8: “Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.” My light? Rise like the sun? [warmly] That sounds wonderful!

**Heart for God:** God is calling you to worship that lets your light shine.

**Heart for the World:** When your light shines, you change the world.

**Heart for God:** When your light shines, you change.

**Reader:** “Your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly.”

**Heart for God:** Healing for you.

**Heart for the World:** Healing for the world.

**Heart for God:** When you give yourself to the worship God wants. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .the worship that frees the oppressed, feeds the hungry, houses the homeless, and clothes the naked poor. . .

**Reader:** “. . .your vindicator shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard.” God all around me, me walking in the light of God, following God’s heart. That’s what I want! Let’s see now, verses 10 and 11. Wow! This is good stuff. Wait ‘til the congregation hears this: “If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your needs in parched places, and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” Hmmm. . . Sharing resources. . .

**Heart for God:** . . .because that is what God wants. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .and because that is what the world needs.

**Reader:** Changing lives. . .

**Heart for God:** . . .your life. . .

**Heart for the World:** . . .and lives around the world.

**All:** Is not this the worship that God chooses, to loose the bonds of injustice and satisfy the needs of the afflicted? Sharing resources, changing lives: Week of Compassion.

When someone steals a man’s clothes we call him a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry man; the coat hanging unused in your closet belongs to the man who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the man who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor.

— Basil the Great,  
Bishop of Caesarea c. 365

# Minutes for Mission

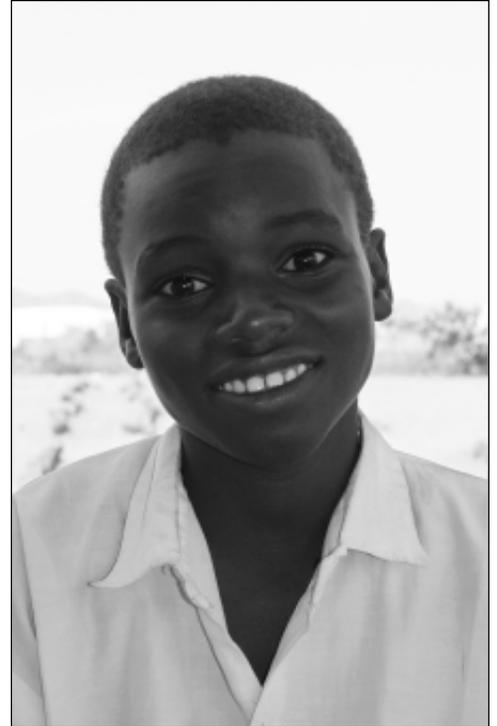
## Sudan

People in Darfur, Sudan, continue to endure grave suffering. Several hundred thousand have been killed by ethnic violence, hunger, and disease. More than two million people have been driven from their homes by the fighting.

Your gifts to Week of Compassion are helping Church World Service and coalition partners provide families with food, water and sanitation, healthcare, shelter, and other much-needed assistance. And, even in the midst of hardship, education is important. A Week of Compassion-supported program helps Abdul Hayrat Mohammed Zachariah and other youngsters continue their studies and regain some sense of normalcy in their lives.

Beyond meeting urgent humanitarian needs, U.S. churches continue to support efforts to bring peace for the people of Darfur.

Photo credit: Gillian Sanford, ACT/Caritas



He who knows that enough is enough will always have enough.

— Lao Tsu



## Chaco Region of South America

The indigenous people of the Chaco region of South America — which includes parts of Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay — have lost much of their ancestral lands, and endure longstanding racism and discrimination within the broader society. Together with five local partners, Church World Service is working to empower these families and communities to reclaim their heritage and reshape their future.

By working together, indigenous communities are gaining access to their lands and working to develop sustainable livelihoods and agricultural practices. With leadership training, traditional and innovative agricultural practices, and a strong focus on education, parents are building a better future for themselves and their children.

Clara Quirino, president of her community in Argentina, is teaching the native Guarani language, handicrafts, and training in natural medicines to 120 youngsters. Your gifts

to Week of Compassion are helping Clara and her people preserve the knowledge of the elders and pass these valuable skills to another generation. Photo credit: CWS

# Minutes for Mission

## Pakistan

Water systems in parts of Pakistan were damaged or destroyed during the October 2005 earthquake. With support from Week of Compassion, Church World Service is helping communities to gain or regain access to clean water. Here, 14-year-old Sania Sawati carries safe water home to her family.

With support from Week of Compassion, the CWS Water for Life/Water for All initiative is supporting sustainable, community-based water projects and helping communities learn how to be actively involved in regional and national water and sanitation policies. Your gifts are helping to provide universal access to water. Together, we are working toward clean, safe water for all.

Photo credit: Paul Jeffrey/ACT



Let us take the risks of peace upon our lives, not impose the risks of war upon the world.

— Quaker proverb

## Humanitarian assistance in part of the Middle East

Hana, 26-years-old and pregnant, was forced to flee her home when she was caught in the midst of violence in one part of the Middle East.

Week of Compassion helps local partners like the Middle East Council of Churches work with families affected by violence in the region. Food, water and sanitation, and medical care are helping families trying to survive in uncertain times. Young adults are learning valuable trade skills, people are opening businesses thanks to starter loans, and children are beginning the healing process in welcoming community centers.

A just and lasting peace in the Middle East is the only way Hana and others will know true security — joining other peoples of faith, let us work and pray toward peace in the Holy Land and the entire region. Photo credit: Hege Opseth, NCA-ACT



## Laos

Laos is landlocked and mountainous, and one of the least-developed countries in Asia. Education for children is key to helping the small country prosper. Your gifts to Week of Compassion help Church World Service provide much-needed teacher training and educational enrichment opportunities for children.

Some 400 children in Vientiane, Laos, are participating in CWS-sponsored programs. And, in more remote areas, ethnic minority students are gaining improved education as schools are built, restored, or resourced, and teachers become better equipped. With better education comes development, as well as the promise of brighter futures for these children and their families. Photo credit: CWS



# Sharing Calendar

The following calendar highlights the difficulties facing individuals, families and communities both in the U.S. and around the world, and suggests activities for each day of our church's Week of Compassion offering period. Each activity offers a suggested donation of coins — pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters, half- or whole dollars. Your household can decide what amount is best for your situation each day.

## Daily Giving Devotion

- At a time appropriate for your household, read the day's entry in the Sharing Calendar. Discuss the situation described and its relationship to your household.
- Read the theme passage for Week of Compassion 2008: Hebrews 13:16a
- Invite each member of the household to describe an experience of "sharing" since the last devotion.
- Consider your household's Sharing Calendar contribution for the day, and add the contribution to your Sharing Box.
- Offer a prayer for the people and situations highlighted in the Sharing Calendar and for the people your household will meet in the coming hours.

## Prayer

Generous and loving God, we thank you for your love and care for us. You have blessed us with [recount some of your household's blessings and gifts]. You call us to share our blessings — to remember to do good and to share what we have. Today we offer a gift to Week of Compassion, and pray especially for [the day's highlighted group/country]. We ask that you would strengthen them, bless their lives, provide them with the assistance they need, and show them your love. Help us to see the needs around us today/tomorrow and to show your love through our actions. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>Week of Compassion will provide some families with chickens for protein and income from the eggs. Give one coin for each bird you see, hear, or eat today.</p>	<p>Women and girls spend more than 10 million "person years" carrying water from remote sources each year. Give one coin for every bottle of water, juice, or soda in your home.</p>	<p>More than 1 billion people live on less than \$1/day. Give one dollar's worth of coins.</p>	<p>A typical refugee tent for a family of eight measures 13'x13'. Give one coin for each room and closet in your home.</p>	<p>Over 100 million children don't go to school because they must work or cannot afford to go. Give one coin for each hour of your school day.</p>	<p>Survivors of the earthquake in China received blankets, food and medicine thanks to Week of Compassion. Give one coin for each medicine bottle in your house.</p>	<p>Chronic, persistent hunger kills 24,000 people every day. Three of every four who die are under five years old. Give one coin for each time a family member has eaten in a restaurant this week.</p>
<p>For many African families, two gallons of water a day is sufficient for a family of three. Give one coin for each bath, load of wash and toilet flush in your home, office, or school today.</p>	<p>AIDS has orphaned more than 13 million children in sub-Saharan Africa. Give one coin for each of your parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles.</p>	<p>Week of Compassion helps thousands of refugees resettle in the U.S. each year. Give one coin for each person you can think of who comes from another country.</p>	<p>Providing mosquito netting is an important part of humanitarian relief and disease control in Asia and Africa. Give one coin for each curtain in your home.</p>	<p>Thousands of people have been living in refugee camps on the Burma/Thailand border for more than 20 years. Give one coin for each year you have lived in your home.</p>	<p>Using micro-credit loans, women in Haiti are starting small businesses to buy food and medicine and send their children to school. Give one coin for each place your family does business today.</p>	<p>Week of Compassion is helping rebuild villages in Bosnia that were destroyed by war. Give one coin for each house on your street.</p>
<p>Six million children under the age of 5 die each year from hunger. Give one coin for each of your birthdays.</p>	<p>In Afghanistan, only 28.7% of people over the age of 15 can read. Give one coin in honor of each of your favorite teachers.</p>	<p>A learn-to-sew program in Mozambique helps women earn more income to support their families. Give one coin for every piece of clothing you wore today.</p>	<p>Church World Service's Religious Services Program addresses the spiritual needs of detainees at eight U.S. Immigration Detention Centers. Give one coin for each staff member at your church.</p>	<p>Water buffalos (four-legged tractors!) help struggling Asian farm families increase their crop yields and carry produce to market. Give one coin for each car, bus, or subway ride your family has taken today.</p>	<p>Families in Vietnam are learning how to build toilets that keep their communities and water supplies safer. Give one coin for every time you go to the bathroom today.</p>	<p>Many people sing praise to God because of Week of Compassion. Give one coin for each radio or for every five music CDs you own.</p>
<p>Many rural women and girls in Africa walk up to four miles one way to get water for their families. Give one coin for each pair of shoes you own.</p>	<p>In the rural Okara district of Pakistan, nearly 9 in 10 children suffer moderate to severe iodine deficiency. Give one coin for each salt shaker in your home.</p>	<p>About 250,000 children are serving as "child soldiers" in 20 countries. Give one coin for each person under 18 in your house.</p>	<p>Week of Compassion helps families rebuild their homes after hurricanes and other disasters. Give one coin for each hurricane or natural disaster you can recall in the last year.</p>	<p>The World Health Organization estimates that one-third of the world is well-fed, one-third is underfed, and one-third is starving. Give one coin for each snack you've eaten today.</p>	<p>In Ethiopia, Fair Trade coffee programs help communities produce income and ensure enough food for all. Give one coin for each cup of coffee the people in your home drank today.</p>	<p>Isaiah tells us that when we please God by caring for others, we will be like a watered garden. Give one coin for every garden plant or flower you can name.</p>