

Episcopal Relief & Development **Advent Activities Guide**

Advent is a great time to engage your children, youth and parishes in the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. School is back in session and vacation has come to an end, so why not use this time to build unity in your community by rallying around a worthwhile endeavor? Here are some fun and creative ideas to help plan and implement an Advent campaign or use the tool kit resource items to enhance ideas of your own!

Host an Alternative Gift Market



A gift market is a wonderful way to share all the blessings we have been given in this world. Use our special Christmas *Gifts for Life* catalogue to offer your congregation dozens of ways to give tangible donations to those who need it most. Want to help prevent malaria? Buy a mosquito net. Want to help provide food for a family? Buy a pig, chicken or a goat. Want to help those after a disaster? Buy a disaster relief kit to provide lifesaving necessities in times of crisis.

Consider decorating a table or area of your parish table with stuffed animals, hay, water pails, blankets, food, band-aids, mosquito nets, fishing nets or tools. Hang a world map and mark the locations where Episcopal Relief & Development is working. (These locations can be found at www.episcopalrelief.org.) Have coloring sheets with animals printed on them with crayons for children to color as a card for someone they love indicating the animal they have bought for them. Please be as creative as you wish and adapt this program to the needs of your parish.

Gift Wrapping Service

Provide this service in exchange for a donation to *Gifts for Life!* This is a great way to engage cross-generational interaction.



Christmas Tree for Life

Put a Christmas tree in the foyer of your church. Decorate it with only a few ornaments. Create ornaments shaped like gifts from the catalogue. When congregants make a donation, let them hang an ornament in honor of the gift and work to decorate the whole tree!

Sale, Sale, Sale

Polish your culinary skills for a bake sale during coffee hour. Hand out *Gifts for Life* catalogs with each purchase to give your customers both knowledge and nourishment! Use the funds raised to purchase items from the catalog that provide food security to those in need.



Popcorn and Movie Night

Invite friends and family to a popcorn and movie night and ask for a minimum donation to attend. You can show a family-friendly or any other popular movie.

Social Media

Facebook and Twitter can create powerful social change. Post a request to your friends and family telling them about *Gifts for Life*. Repeat the post about once a week as a reminder – not everyone will take action the first time he or she sees it (and some will not take action at all.) Or when you purchase a gift online, be sure and utilize the “share now” feature to bring greater awareness to *Gifts for Life*!



Alternative Gifts

Instead of holiday gifts, ask your friends and family to make a donation. The tax deduction they will receive may enable them to contribute a larger gift.

Just-for-Fun Game

Sports like football, basketball and hockey are lots of fun in the winter, and are also great ways to raise funds. Organize fun games like parents versus kids or girls versus boys. Charge a small fee to join a team, or allow people to join with a donation amount of their choice.

Christmas Light Tour

Reds, oranges, yellows and blues... It's a community art show and it's free for everyone to enjoy. This is a great fundraiser for areas that have communities dedicated to decorating for the holidays. People love to make an evening of driving around and enjoying the beautiful decorations, but someone has to drive and they are not able to pay as much attention as they would like. Take over the responsibility driving and host a Christmas Light tour.



Pancake Breakfast

This is one of the most common fundraisers because it's easy and inexpensive to plan, and who doesn't like pancakes? This kind of fundraiser is great for Sundays, and makes a great church fundraiser. If you can hold it at your church, everyone can come by and have a warm breakfast after worship service.



Get Wacky for the Greater Good

Don't be afraid to get a little crazy for this amazing cause. When someone makes a donation through *Gifts for Life*, give him or her a mask or stuffed animal to sport throughout the parish! Be loud and proud about helping those around the world in need. If your congregants are hesitant to make a big splash, give them a button or sticker to wear. Get the rector in on the fun as well!

Decorate the Sanctuary

Hang stuffed animals, gardening tools, water bottles, etc., in the sanctuary: from the ceiling, on the walls, outside on the building or the church sign, or create a display to promote *Gifts for Life*. This kind of engaging display is hard to ignore, and is sure to highlight the possibilities of transforming a life with lasting impact to parishioners of all ages!

Please check out, www.episcopalrelief.org, for more information on specific programs in the different regions we serve. You can use the information to educate your congregation on the work of Episcopal Relief & Development through our Anglican partners to help people around the world!

Remember to use the tool kit resource items to enhance ideas of your own!