

# **Episcopal Relief & Development**

## **Communities of Learning**

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## Introduction

This **four-session curriculum** is intended for small group gatherings, online or in person. The objective is to help participants to grow in awareness of, and desire to, serve the populations and priorities aligned with the mission of Episcopal Relief & Development. As a faith formation curriculum, it offers group support and asks participants to be open to where God may be leading, in terms of how to grow in empathy and to respond to your new learnings in daily living. We know that our strengths come from pursuit of the things we are interested in and, so, we trust that our strengths relative to this good work will be revealed in the prayerful learning process.

## Prayer

We ask you, loving God, to open our eyes to what is happening in communities at risk around the world. Guide us as we review the transformative responses of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Open our hearts to see where we might feel led to be of service, too.  
*Amen.*

## Group Rule of Life

- Group Prayer
- Guided Meditation
- Intercessory Prayer at Home





We will explore the Episcopal Relief & Development priorities for **Women** and how we can apply them in our daily lives.

Every woman should live a life free from violence and be treated with dignity and respect.

There are often barriers to a woman's growth and development, particularly the ongoing violence against women that takes place in many parts of the world.

# Opening Prayer - Youth Session

We ask your blessing on this learning community, Loving God, that we may be attentive to the movements of your Spirit. Guide us as we grow to understand how we might participate in the global priorities of Episcopal Relief & Development to empower women, nurture children and meet the challenges of climate change and disaster resilience. We offer to you our open hearts and our desire to promote the dignity of all people. In Your name we pray. Amen.

# Opening Prayer - Adult session

Loving God, We ask your blessing on this learning community, gathered for mutual formation in the ways of love. Fill us with your Spirit, that we may open our hearts to the needs of women and children at risk, as well as the challenges of climate change and disaster resilience. Guide our efforts, we pray, as we discern what is ours to do in Your plan for human flourishing among all people. May we strive to be Your Good News in the world. *Amen.*



# Introductions

Share your name,  
[location], and *one*  
word for what is on  
your heart today.

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## Scripture Reading

They are like trees planted  
along the riverbank, bearing  
fruit each season. Their leaves  
never wither, and they prosper  
in all they do.

Psalms 1:3 NLT





# Guided Meditation

Close your eyes or soften your gaze, which ever feels more comfortable for you.

# Learning Together

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# The Lesson

1. Promoting Gender Equality
2. Creating Economic Stability
3. Cultivating Women Leaders
4. Ending Violence Against Women

# Promoting Gender Equality

Our work with communities focuses on how to balance the power structure between women and men, and encourage shared decision-making in household and other roles. We help ensure that women's rights are recognized and protected and define specific actions that can address discrimination, violence and other forms of abuse. We also collaborate with local community members, faith leaders and other partners to integrate these strategies into all aspects of the lives of women and girls including their education, earning potential and health.



# Creating Economic Stability

Data shows that when women have more financial earning power and the ability to decide how finances are managed, they bring positive economic change to the lives of their children, families and communities. Our programs encourage women to actively participate in financial decisions and to earn an income so they are able to provide food and health care for their families, as well as educate their children.



# Creating Economic Stability

Women participate in Savings with Education (SwE) groups, which offer critical financial and business training as well as small business loans to individuals and groups. The SwE groups develop micro-insurance products, village banks and cooperatives for people without access to traditional financial markets and institutions.

# Cultivating Women Leaders

When women take leadership roles, they can influence family and community life and encourage the equal distribution of resources. Our work strengthens and elevates women's voices individually and collectively so that they become active in decision-making at a local and national level.

# Cultivating Women Leaders

This shift plays a significant part in changing long-held attitudes, values and beliefs. We work with communities to ensure those in power are accountable to women. Our programs also invest in institutional change that supports transformative leadership positions for women and encourages them to serve as role models for girls.

# Ending Violence Against Women

Violence has a devastating impact on family and community structures. By reinforcing existing inequality, it undermines the health, dignity, security and independence of those affected. It also greatly contributes to the cycle of poverty. Survivors, spouses and their communities work together to address trauma and promote healing, which leads them to become more resilient.

# Ending Violence Against Women

We collaborate with local leaders to help prevent violence and respond to those impacted. In addition, we are contributing to research which highlights the ways that faith leaders can galvanize real social and cultural change. Our work engages community and faith leaders to take action and speak out against violence. Our programs play a pivotal role in creating interfaith networks which provide tools, skills and support for leaders to challenge the attitudes and behaviors that perpetuate injustice and discrimination.



# Instructional Video



# Using Mutual Invitation for Sharing

When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another, because there is no conversation until everyone has spoken.

# Questions for Reflection - Youth

1. What does this information have to do with me?
2. How does it challenge or inspire me?
3. What small step can I take in response?

# Questions for Reflection - Adult session

1. What moved you in your learning?
2. Did it stretch or challenge you in some way?
3. How might your new learning change who you are becoming as a Christian disciple and enrich or equip your witness?



# Group Reflection/Brainstorm

What would support your  
ongoing formation in  
this area?

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Pray in this coming  
week for the people  
we met today and for  
one another in this  
Community of  
Learning.



**Let us pray.**



# Closing Prayer

Loving God, We thank you for drawing us into the work of justice and flourishing, envisioned by Episcopal Relief & Development.

We ask your blessing upon this learning community, seeking to grow in understanding and commitment.

Guide us, we pray, to walk in your way, so that we may embody the world that we deeply desire and long for.

Bless our loving actions in our daily lives, our families and partnerships, our communities and connections, for the Family of God and for all of God's creation. *Amen.*

# At Home

Choose one or more links to explore the topic more deeply:

## Art

<https://bit.ly/3kYB5gj>

## Music

<https://bit.ly/3M3UQig>

## Ted Talk

<https://bit.ly/3srRGx7>

# ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE.