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.

![Episcopal Relief & Development logo]

Group Rule of Life

- Group Prayer
- Guided Meditation
- Intercessory Prayer at Home

Episcopal Relief & Development Priorities for Children

Every child deserves the chance to achieve their full potential. Research shows that the first 1,000 days are foundational, affecting a child's capacity to grow, learn and thrive over his or her entire life. The first few years form the basis for future learning, good health and nutrition and overall well-being.

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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.*

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Introductions

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

Scripture Reading

For it was you who formed my inward parts; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; that I know very well.

Psalm 139:13-14 NRSV

Guided Meditation

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

Learning Together

The Lesson

1. Protecting Health and Preventing Disease

2. Empowering Parents

3. Protecting Parents

Protecting Health and Preventing Disease

In many countries around the world, pregnant women, mothers and children are most at-risk of contracting deadly and preventable diseases because they lack access to health care.

Protecting Health and Preventing Disease

Episcopal Relief & Development trains local health workers and community volunteers to focus on prenatal and postnatal care, prevention of pneumonia, malaria and diarrhea (e.g. immunizations and nets), mother-to-child transmission and care for families impacted by HIV/AIDS. The programs also provide access to clean water, proper sanitation and hygiene education, and help with early identification and treatment of illnesses.

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Empowering Parents

Education about early stimulation and growth and development is critical for children to reach their full potential. Using a holistic and integrated approach, Episcopal Relief & Development focuses on teaching parents and caregivers skills and activities that involve play, nurturing and stimulation through home visits and family support networks. The programs support early care and education and can help children transition to quality preschools and primary school.

Protecting Parents

Social protection lessens the effects of poverty on families, strengthening their ability to care for children and enhance access to basic services. The programs focus on underserved groups and communities by offering counseling and other services to prevent domestic and child abuse, ensure parents have adequate child care and train faith leaders to help put an end to violence and support people in crisis situations.

Instructional Video

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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.

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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

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?

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Group Reflection/Brainstorm

What would support your ongoing formation in this area?

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

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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.*

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At Home

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

Ted Talk

https://bit.ly/3Pgy5tC

Art

https://bit.ly/3yLiGMb

Poetry

https://bit.ly/3kx3w8k

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Working Together for Lasting Change