



Episcopal
Relief & Development
Working Together for Lasting Change



Joy & Wonder

Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development

A TOOLKIT TO WORK TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE



Early Childhood Development volunteer uses FAMA (Facts, Associations, Meaning, Action) cards in her work with a family in Ghana. The cards aid in the discussion of how to engage and play with babies and young children, skills that are necessary to the child's psycho-social development.

Thank you to our partners for the photos in this toolkit:

Angola: Anglican Church of Angola

Ghana: Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization (ADDRO)

Guatemala: Episcopal Church of Guatemala

Jordan: Holy Land Institute for the Deaf

Kenya: Anglican Church of Kenya, ADS-Nyanza

Malawi: Anglican Council in Malawi (ACM)

Zambia: Zambia Anglican Council Outreach Programs (ZACOP)

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Welcome to Joy & Wonder – Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development

You are a part of our extensive faith network and are invited to partner with us directly, sharing the work and the blessing of making lasting change.

This is one of four toolkits centered on the priorities of Episcopal Relief & Development. These toolkits are designed to assist Faith Leaders across a variety of communities: in congregations, campus ministries, dinner churches, retreat centers and more.

The goals of these toolkits are:

1. To expand awareness of the expert and lifesaving work of Episcopal Relief & Development
2. To invite Faith Communities and individuals to financially support this work
3. To relieve faith leaders and their communities of issue-fatigue with practical tools; transforming their concerns into empowered action

Based on our four priorities, the toolkits are:

- **Joy & Wonder – Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to equip parents and caregivers so young children can reach their full potential
- **Grace, Justice & Hope – For Women & Girls Everywhere**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to forge partnerships to reduce violence and advance equality
- **Nurture & Sustain – Action-Based Climate Resilience**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to invest in communities to strengthen resilience to climate change
- **Restore & Renew – Responding & Rebuilding when Disaster Strikes**
Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development to provide emergency relief and long-term support in disasters

Using the resources in these toolkits, Faith Leaders will be guided by straightforward and accessible programs of campaign planning, prayer and worship and local community engagement and outreach. All four toolkits are available on our website [here](#).

You are a part of our extensive faith network and are invited to partner with us directly, sharing the work and the blessing of making lasting change.

Thank you.

Introduction

The Maasai, a tribe in East Africa, offers the words “Casserian Engeri” as their traditional greeting to one another. It means, “And how are the children?”

They do not ask each other, “How are you?” or “How’s your day?” Instead, they ask about the next generation. The Maasai believe that monitoring the well-being of their children is the best way to determine the future health and prosperity of their whole society.

Every child deserves the chance to achieve their full potential.

Episcopal Relief & Development’s work in Early Childhood Development promotes nurturing care that fosters responsive caregiving, good health and nutrition and early learning and play. We also join with our partners to reduce unhealthy environmental factors like poverty, malnutrition and exposure to violence.

This toolkit, called *Joy & Wonder*, explores ways that Episcopal Relief & Development works to achieve these goals. It offers insight into our unique and effective methods and invites you and your community to join in this important and life-giving work.

The following fact sheet on integrated early childhood development highlights our flagship partnership, *Moments That Matter®* (MTM). MTM is a direct response to the nurturing care framework, particularly in rural, underserved communities, where access to information and resources are limited. It provides long-term holistic parenting empowerment and targeted wraparound support to families so that children have the start to life they need to develop to their full potential. The full report can be found [here](#).

This toolkit will help you become advocates for early childhood wellness in your own churches and communities, placing our youngest community members and those who care for them on your list of prayers and priorities.

This toolkit contains worship materials, study and outreach programs and links to resources that will help you make a difference with children’s wellness everywhere.

You are an essential member of our global village, working together for lasting change.

This entire toolkit, as well as more information about how you can engage with our work, is available on our website at www.episcopalrelief.org.

Fact Sheet – Early Childhood Development

The first 1,000 days of life

The first 1,000 days of life are crucial for laying the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. During this time, the brain develops rapidly, forming approximately one million new neural connections every second.ⁱ As such, this is a period of tremendous potential and, at the same time, one of significant vulnerability. Numerous studies have shown that nurturing care that fosters good health and nutrition, early learning and play, and “serve and return” interactions—the focused, back and forth, two-way interaction between an infant and an adult when both the infant and adult are trying to communicate, are critical in the life of the young child. These actions, combined with positive environmental factors such as protection and economic stability, establish the building blocks for a child’s full development—including educational achievement, economic productivity, health, strong communities and successful parenting in the future. Conversely, adverse childhood experiences and interactions (e.g., abuse or neglect) can result in deficits in brain function and physical, cognitive and socio-emotional growth that can have lasting consequences.ⁱⁱ

Investing in young children and their caregivers during this critical stage yields lifelong benefits.

Moments That Matter®

Episcopal Relief & Development’s flagship integrated early childhood development (ECD) program partnership, *Moments That Matter®* (MTM), is a direct response to the nurturing care imperative, particularly in rural, underserved communities, where access to information about nurturing care and resources are limited. **MTM provides long-term (18-24 months) holistic parenting empowerment and targeted wraparound supports to families** so that children (ages 0-3) have the start to life they need to develop to their full potential.

MTM strengthens developmental protective factors while reducing risk factors. Early childhood development is influenced by a variety of factors that either protect or pose risks to a child’s growth and well-being. *Moments That Matter®* is based on the [Nurturing Care Framework for Early Childhood Development](#) and draws upon behavioral science and proven social and behavior change communications tools (e.g., FAMA cards)ⁱⁱⁱ to strengthen key protective factors, including responsive caregiving, access to health care and nutrition and stimulation through early learning and play opportunities. At the same time, MTM works to mitigate or reduce factors that can inhibit optimal child development, such as poverty and malnutrition—through its savings & loan group model (Savings with Education)^{iv}—and exposure to violence.



Figure 1: MTM Countries

i Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. (n.d.). [The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do](#).

ii Shonkoff, J.P., Garner, A.S., Siegel, B.S., Dobbins, M.I., Earls, M.F., McGuinn, L., & Wood, D.L. (2020). [The Lifelong Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress](#). *Pediatrics*, 146(6), e2020024589

iii FAMA (or Facts, Association, Meaning, Action) dialogue process is facilitated through a set of pictorial codes that present different practices and behaviors in context. They are used by facilitators to guide participants through a process of selfdiscovery, moving them from reflection to action.

iv Savings with Education (SwE) is a highly replicable savings-led, microfinance methodology that incorporates simple, relevant, high-impact training in business, finance, and health.

Supporting caregivers and young children

In light of the opportunity that caregivers have during the first 1,000 days to shape their child's potential and support their long-term well-being, **Moments That Matter® focuses on families with children ages zero to three** — in particular, families whose children are at the highest risk of underdevelopment due to poverty and other risk factors. MTM targets and provides extensive supports to Primary Caregivers, including responsive parenting training and resources, coupled with ongoing mentorship and championing (see Figure 2). Moreover, MTM underscores the importance of, and promotes father-secondary caregiver engagement by addressing social norms, stigma and economic structures that can act as barriers and discourage men from engaging in caregiving and household responsibilities. Research shows that children benefit from having multiple nurturing caregivers, and evidence suggest that fathers' or male-caregivers' participation — when it is loving, equitable and non-violent — contributes to improved outcomes for women and children as well as themselves.^v **Since 2012, MTM has reached more than 35,000 Primary Caregivers and over 15,000 father-secondary caregivers across six Sub-Saharan Africa countries (Figure 1). As a result, more than 70,000 young children have benefited and experienced a more nurturing relationship with their caregiver.**

A community-led approach

Moments That Matter® uniquely blends evidence-based social and behavior change strategies with a sustainable, community-led model for parenting empowerment and nurturing care. The model centers on mobilizing and equipping faith leaders, volunteer ECD Promoters and other community stakeholders as champions of nurturing care, while empowering caregivers of young children with responsive parenting knowledge and skills, resilience and self-care strategies, and a robust network of support (see right) so that caregivers can meet their basic needs and better fulfill their roles as a child's first teacher and protector. MTM's community-led model complements often overburdened health systems and that are less effective in reaching the most marginalized households by mobilizing a network of trained volunteers. In all countries, MTM coordinates with government health providers and community health workers to increase families' uptake of their services (e.g., nutrient supplements and immunizations).

Creating a support network for caregivers

Trained ECD Promoters facilitate monthly **Primary Caregiver Support & Learning Groups**. These groups provide safe spaces for building responsive care skills, mutual learning, critical reflection and dialogue and peer support. Primary Caregiver Support & Learning Groups are complemented with **ECD home visits** (two visits per month), where ECD Promoters observe family interactions and monitor children, in accordance to developmental milestones and make referrals if potential signs of delay or other issues arise.

Figure 2: MTM Community-led Model



^v World Health Organization. [Nurturing Care and Men's Engagement: A Thematic Brief](#)

Moments That Matter® has been proven effective through multiple external evaluations. An [impact evaluation](#) (2018-2021) of MTM in Zambia and Kenya – the two largest and longest running programs, launched in 2012 and 2014, respectively – conducted by the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC) concluded that **MTM improved Primary Caregivers’ responsive care and early learning with their children**, increased their use of positive discipline, improved their own well-being and strengthened family livelihoods. Further, the study determined that MTM’s community-led, social and behavior change model was effective in expanding nurturing care at the individual, family and community levels. Below are select findings from the study.

a. Improved responsive caregiving & child bonding:

- Caregivers reported significant increased confidence in handling parental responsibilities: 94% at endline, compared to 82% at baseline in Kenya; 92% compared to 68% in Zambia
- Primary Caregivers increased time spent talking, singing and responding to their child, while doing routine household chores; Primary Caregivers increased dedicated playtime with their child during the week.
- Father-secondary caregivers increased the number of days per week they made time to play; fathers who reported not playing with their children before MTM reported playing regularly with their children by endline.

b. Improved cognitive, language, social, motor skills and emotional development:

- Primary Caregivers increased interactions that contributed to children’s cognitive, language, social, motor skills and emotional development: In Zambia, Primary Caregivers increased interactions across all five domains by an average of 27%.
- Caregivers reported using everyday objects as play materials (e.g., pots for banging and sticks for drawing on the ground; Additionally, caregivers increased children’s playtime with other children.

c. Improved security and safety:

- Primary Caregivers increased their use of different positive discipline practices—e.g., Caregivers increased “Tell ‘no’ and briefly explain why” practice by 46% in Kenya and 33% in Zambia; Caregivers reported seeing improvements in children’s behavior and learning and in their relationships with their children, as a result.

d. Improved child nutrition:

- Primary Caregivers increased breastfeeding knowledge; 88% of caregivers in Kenya and 99% in Zambia understood that breast milk is the best nutrition for infants under 6 months.
- At endline, more children had a nutritious diet due to MTM’s training on home vegetable gardens, cooking classes and seed inputs; 66% (Kenya) and 59% (Zambia) had high quality, diverse, age appropriate diets.

e. Reduced parental stress for Primary Caregivers

- At endline, 39% (Kenya) and 49% (Zambia) of Primary Caregivers reported experiencing reduced parental stress in the month prior, compared to just 15% and 21% respectively at baseline. Reasons cited for lower stress included children’s better behavior due to positive discipline, fathers taking on more parenting duties and helping around the house, and having savings on hand through the Savings & Loan Groups to help with basic needs and emergencies.

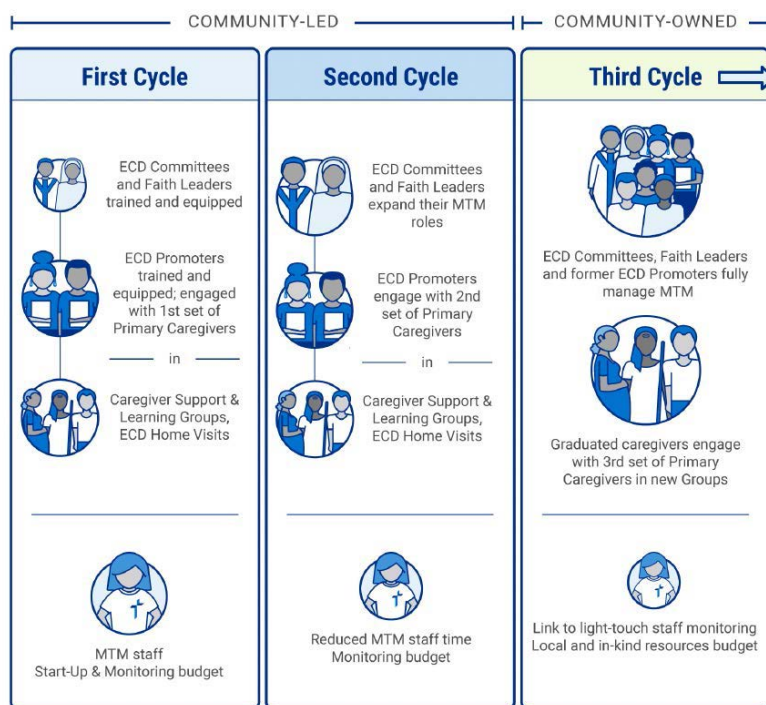
Community-ownership & sustainability

Moments That Matter® is designed in cycles that build toward community ownership and sustainability (Figure 3). Each cycle engages a new set of Primary Caregivers and provides ECD Promoters opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills. Over the course of the first two cycles, MTM community leadership (ECD Committees, ECD Promoters, and faith leaders) takes on increasing responsibility, thereby reducing, over time, the reliance on Episcopal Relief & Development and external budget support. **By the third cycle and beyond, MTM is intended to be community-owned and supported by local resources.**

Sustained commitment

Underpinning the success and sustained engagement of ECD Promoters in the program is social cohesion and bonding that develops between Promoters and Primary Caregiver Support & Learning Groups. The 2018-2021 impact evaluation highlighted MTM's high retention of ECD Promoters, who serve the program in a volunteer capacity. Nearly all ECD Promoters (95%) from the 1st Cycle continued on to the 2nd Cycle, including 100% of ECD Promoters in Kenya.

Figure 3: MTM Sustainability Model



Overview of the Toolkit

How to Begin: Discerning Local Leadership and Setting Goals

Make a plan and get started.

In Worship: Prayers, Liturgies & Devotions

Prayers and plans for Children's Chapel, Intergenerational Worship, Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and special seasonal observances.

Formation: Study and Grow with Joy & Wonder

Faith Formation resources to help you learn about Episcopal Relief & Development's flagship Early Childhood Development program partnership, *Moments That Matter*® and fun activities to help your community learn how they can be involved in making a difference.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

This resource packed with ideas based on the *Moments That Matter*® partnership will help you create neighborhood events, build partnerships and expand resources for early childhood caregivers and families in your communities.

Fun & Fundraising with Episcopal Relief & Development

Learn ways to help your faith community host a successful fundraising campaign for the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. Also, have fun with our *Gifts for Life* program, matching your campaign with individuals, families and teams through fellowship events and creative connections.



How to Begin: Discerning Local Leadership and Setting Goals

“A child’s upbringing belongs not to the parents but to the community.”

“Whomsoever is not taught by the mother will be taught by the world.”

“It takes a village to raise a child.”

These African proverbs illustrate why Episcopal Relief & Development is inviting churches and other faith-based groups to join us in prioritizing early childhood development worldwide. We are all a part of the global village and our entire village benefits from the wellness of every generation. The whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of young people.

This work centers on faith, hope and love. We have faith that this is work God calls us to do. We have hope that we can shape the world of today and tomorrow for the youngest children. And we rely on the never-ending supply of love from God who will support our individual and corporate initiatives to make lasting change in early childhood development near and far.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Parish & Community Sample Survey about Early Childhood Development*
- » *Setting Goals*
- » *Individual and Team Pledges*
- » *Communities of Learning*
- » *Lectio Divina Bible Study for Leaders*

Other ideas and resources include:

- Meet with your worship team to schedule observances throughout the year, including:
 - * Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday
 - * Children’s Sabbath

As you begin this exploration, be sure to identify your closest Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner. They can guide you around the website and help you find the resources you need. If you need help finding your Ministry Partner, email us engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

The leadership team should also reach out to other ministry team leaders, including Christian formation and youth leaders, the vestry and wardens, music directors, local campus ministry groups and any other ministry that might intersect with early childhood development. Work together step-by-step to share the joy of achieving your goals.

Thank you for doing what you can to join us in making lasting change.

Measuring Your Faith Community's Interest Level and Setting Goals

Setting goals around using these *Joy & Wonder* materials involves taking the pulse of your community to assess their commitment to making lasting change in the care of children and those who care for them, both locally and abroad. A first step is to discern who among your staff and parishioners are called to take leadership roles in the ministry of Early Childhood Development. A survey is a good place to start and a sample is included in this section. Together, these leaders can begin to identify their purpose and goals, and the parish can commission them in this important work of leadership and care.



Learning to Communicate: Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Holy Land Institute for the Deaf, an institution of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem.

Parish & Community Sample Survey about Early Childhood Development

The first 1,000 days of every child's life are crucial for laying the foundation for future learning, behavior and health. We here at _____ (*community, school or organization name*) are considering a plan to incorporate Early Childhood Development into our _____ (*top priorities/mission statement/goals*) in the upcoming _____ (*budget/season/cycle/program year*).

Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, we hope to both support the successful work they are doing across the globe and to discern how we might become engaged in this work, making lasting changes in Early Childhood Development in our own communities.

Please take a moment to let us know which areas of engagement you are personally interested in supporting. This will help ensure that any work we pursue in this area will reflect our community's interest and passion. Thank you

WORSHIP:

I want _____ (*insert community, school or organization name*) to help us, as a community, focus on early childhood development.

I would support (*check those that interest you*):

☐ Attending the annual Episcopal Relief & Development service, typically held on the first Sunday of Lent, highlighting through our prayers proven solutions and hope for Early Childhood Development.

☐ Observing the Children's Sabbath on the third Sunday of October.

☐ Being in conversations about making our prayer and worship gatherings more supportive and welcoming for children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

☐ Teaching about baptism in our neighborhoods and on social media and welcoming families who are not currently a part of it to celebrate this sacrament with us.

☐ Adding collects, litanies and other prayers to our weekly worship service reminding us to be stewards of the very youngest children in the world and those who care for them.

HOSPITALITY AND FORMATION:

I want _____ (*community*) to teach me more about how we can be more directly involved in (check those that interest you):

___ Understanding the current status of children aged 0-3 in our community and where _____ (*our community*) can make a difference.

___ Being in conversations about making our nursery and early Christian formation more intentionally supportive and welcoming of children aged 0-3 and their caregivers.

___ Creating welcome baskets for newborns with prayers for the parents, information about baptism and practical supplies, gifts, books and other information for children aged 0-3.

___ Learning about the work Episcopal Relief & Development is doing to make lasting change through *Moments that Matter*®, how it is improving the lives of children and those who care for them around the world and what we can learn from their research to help our neighbors.

___ Participating in a book group or Bible study exploring the issues of early childhood development so I can understand the situation more deeply and direct my prayers and other resources toward improving the lives of those most affected.

___ Creating and resourcing (hospitality, staff, communications, concurrent nursery care) a caregiver's support group for those with children aged 3 and under in their homes.

ENGAGEMENT:

I am interested in _____ (*community*) making other connections in early childhood development, including (check those that interest you):

___ Making sure that our local food and sundry ministries have sufficient nutrition and supplies, including mental wellness resources for distribution to families caring for children aged 0-3.

___ Providing and promoting a nursery for much-needed recovery groups for persons meeting in our space with infants.

___ Partnering with local early childhood development care providers and non-profits in areas like volunteering and supplying crisis nurseries, parent education, Head Start, programs about financial literacy for teen parents, immigration services and other agencies that serve infants and their caregivers.

___ Beginning/continuing a conversation about hosting an early childhood care center in our space and/or fortifying an existing center or one in our neighborhood.

___ Partnering with Episcopal Relief & Development, helping raise funds for their work and utilizing their resources and connections to aid communities.

___ Partnering with the Episcopal Public Policy Network to learn more about how governmental interventions and legislation can bring about larger institutional changes for early childhood advocacy.

Please use the remaining space to let us know if you have any other ideas or insights about this new ministry. If you would like our team to reach out to you directly, please include your name and contact information. Thank you.

Setting Goals

Okay, I've checked my community for readiness – now what?

Whether you used the survey provided in the toolkit *Joy & Wonder* from Episcopal Relief & Development or simply had a series of conversations with stakeholders around Early Childhood Development, you now have a sense of how interested your community is in pursuing this ministry and at what level.

What if the response was only lukewarm? What are my options?

Observe [Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday](#). It is simple and the website offers a host of resources. You can incorporate prayers and petitions into a worship service and include the brochures available for free in each worship leaflet. Doing so illuminates the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, which may inspire others to be more responsive next time around.

You can also order and distribute our [Gifts for Life](#) catalogs. This is a fun and hope-filled way to engage your community in Episcopal Relief & Development's program priorities, including Early Childhood Development.

What if the response was resounding and people started requesting more staff, space and funding?

You're gonna need a bigger boat. It's time to start setting some goals and getting started!

First, your community will need to develop a plan to create or accelerate your Early Childhood Development ministry. Find a time to gather the people who showed interest, even in different areas, and explore with them the creation of a couple of short- and long-term goals. Prioritize the goals based on the interest shown both by the initial surveys and by those who actually attend the meetings. Once you've developed a few of these goals, explore questions around each goal, including:

1. SHOULD WE ADJUST OR INNOVATE?

- Do we have an existing intentionality around Early Childhood Development in our community?
- Is it effective, reaching those it needs to reach and relevant to what our community has expressed as its interests?
- Can this current program be improved?
- Do we have the resources and capacity to make the necessary adjustments? If not, are there other community programs that offer these services that we can direct our faith community to?

2. WHERE SHOULD WE START TAKING ACTION?

- Contact your closest Ministry Partner from Episcopal Relief & Development and invite them to a meeting. If you need help finding your Diocesan Ministry Partner, contact us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org
- Articulate your goals as a team.
- Prioritize your resources — time, space, prayers, people and money — accordingly.
- Outline action steps, making sure that your program reflects early childhood development best practices and standards.
- Assign roles.
- Set timelines.
- When your team has approved the plan, implement it, then refine and adjust it as needed.
- Consider setting regular benchmarks for additional evaluations and refinements as needed.



A young boy in Ghana while his parents attend a health workshop sponsored by Ghanaian Health Service and the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization.

Individual and Team Pledges

The quality of nurturing care that children receive during the first 1,000 days of life affects them in ways that last a lifetime. That's why investing in parents, caregivers and young children during the critical 0–3 age is so important. We are all a part of the global village and our entire village benefits from the wellness of every generation. The whole community has an essential role to play in the growth and development of its young people.

You may already have a ministry team working with very young children and their caregivers. It might be those who guide your nursery, teach in your classrooms, lead intergenerational worship and fellowship or possibly convene a parent's support group. You may also have an early childhood center affiliated with your church, school or organization who would benefit from your making early childhood development a priority.

Inviting these existing leaders and others into working teams to make an intentional pledge to prioritize early childhood development can help you set goals and begin your work. It might even inspire the entire community to join in for a season, partnering with other community organizations and Episcopal Relief & Development, to expand the impact they can make in the lives of children near and far.

Here are sample pledges you are invited to modify and take privately and/or share with your ministry teams and faith community.

Pledge for an Individual:

As a committed advocate for early childhood development, I (*name*) pledge to pay attention to the needs of very young children and their caregivers in my family, neighborhood and at (*faith community*). Seeking out volunteer and giving opportunities, I will actively support others in leadership, caregiving and advocacy roles, providing a supportive environment for them and those they serve. I will propose and support initiatives like observing Children's Sabbath, Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday and other local events and campaigns to expand awareness of this essential work.

(Name)

(Date)

Pledge for an Early Childhood Development Ministry Team and/or Faithful Community:

We (*ministry team and/or faithful community*) are committed to protecting the very youngest children and their caregivers near and far. Guided by the wisdom and research of Episcopal Relief & Development, we will focus on their five key areas of making a difference for lasting change. In partnership with other local faith institutions and community leaders, we will set goals for our (*ministry team and/or faithful community*) team and community that serve as building blocks for a child's full and healthy development by:

- **Equipping and supporting parents and primary caregivers** to deliver the highest quality care, ensuring their children are reaching important physical, mental and emotional milestones. This includes supporting programs like Parents as Teachers and other training opportunities for caregivers and being intentional about the environments and positive support for the programs we offer our youngest community members.
- **Preventing disease and protecting the health of children** by practicing high safety and wellness standards with our youngest members, including a regular inventory of furnishings, nutrition, hygiene practices and adult supervision. We will look for ways to connect with other organizations that also provide healthy guidelines for the very young, including possibly hosting childcare classes, infant CPR training and volunteering at local clinics and shelters for very young children.
- **Creating opportunities for families to increase their income** by learning more about Episcopal Relief & Development's [community-led savings](#) and loan groups so caregivers can better provide for themselves and their children.
- **Improving food security and nutrition for children and families** by making sure any food distributions (fellowship, outreach, community events) take into account the needs of children ages 0-3. We will make our kitchen available for healthy cooking classes, identifying families with young children to participate in vegetable gardens and encouraging healthy options as snacks (in addition to the fun stuff) when collecting special holiday and school food items.
- **Protecting children and families by equipping community leaders**, including faith leaders, to support families and caregivers while using their status in the community to reduce unhealthy factors like neglect and exposure to violence and promoting positive behaviors. We will join with local foster care agencies, children's shelters and crisis nurseries to provide support for families in need.

We will also support and partner with agencies supporting this work, including [Episcopal Relief & Development](#), [Episcopal Church Creation Care](#) and the [Episcopal Public Policy Network](#).

Using the *Joy & Wonder* toolkit and learning from those who collaborate with us on this goal, we will spend (*a year, a season, a triennial etc.*) making early childhood development a priority in our faithful community.

(*ministry team and/or team chair*)

(*Date*)

Communities of Learning

As your congregation is discerning its role in early childhood development and/or as your team is beginning its work, we recommend taking together the Communities of Learning session for Children. The session is part of Episcopal Relief & Development's [Communities of Learning curriculum](#). Intended for small group gatherings, online or in person, the objective is to help participants 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 the work of advocating for the wellness of all children, near and far. As part of the session, you might invite your Diocesan Episcopal Relief & Development representative to make a presentation. You might also include a local leader from Head Start or a neighboring preschool.

The session for Children includes a PowerPoint or PDF with notes for the leader or presenter. You can decide which works best for your group. A [facilitator's guide](#) provides formation objectives, learning goals, community agreements, preparation tips and additional resources.

Presenter Notes

These presenter notes correlate to the Episcopal Relief & Development [PDF](#) or [PowerPoint](#) presentation.

SLIDE 1 – TITLE SLIDE

SLIDE 2 – INTRODUCTION

Leader: Read or paraphrase introduction.

SLIDE 3 – PRAYER

Leader: Invite participants to join in the prayer.

SLIDE 4 – GROUP RULE OF LIFE

Leader: Explain that there are three ways in which the learning community will commit to a Rule of Life during the sessions. In other words, the sacred context of each session is understood to include prayer and meditation, together and at home.

SLIDE 5 – PRIORITIES FOR CHILDREN

Leader: This session begins with a description of our topic. Read aloud or invite a reader.

SLIDE 6 – OPENING PRAYER - YOUTH SESSION

Leader: In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

SLIDE 7 – OPENING PRAYER - ADULT SESSION

Leader: In this Ritual of Dedication, invite online participants to light a candle, take some deep breaths and pray the opening prayer aloud, together. Let us pray...

SLIDE 8 – INTRODUCTIONS

Leader: Invite each participant to share their name and a word for what is on their heart today. (*Zoom group: If the group is 10+, you might invite participants to write this in the chat instead.*)

SLIDE 9 – SCRIPTURE READING

Leader: Read the Scripture aloud.

SLIDE 10 – GUIDED MEDITATION

Leader: I invite you, now, to check that you are in a comfortable position, loosening and softening your body as needed. (*Zoom group: invite group to turn off cameras, if they wish.*)

You may close your eyes or soften your gaze, whichever feels more comfortable for you...Begin to settle yourself by noticing and putting aside any concerns, unfinished plans or tensions from this day...as we take the turn inward, putting ourselves in the presence of God...

You may take a few long deep, cleansing breaths, tuning in to the movement of your breath collecting your attention...

Breathing in the breath of Spirit, breathing out compassion and care.

Breathing in the breath of the Spirit, breathing out welcome and generosity.

When you notice thoughts or emotions arising, simply take note and then return your attention, very gently, to your breathing...there is no need to push thoughts or feelings away. Instead, maintain a posture of welcome to your own interior movements.

Continue attending to the breath as you join, in the silence of your heart, in these prayers for the healing of the world:

May we be in loving service to all.
May we be tenacious in humility and deeper understanding.
May we promote the dignity of every human being.
May we understand ourselves to be part of the natural world.
May all children be encouraged to grow and flourish.
May all women be encouraged to grow and flourish.
May we reverence God in all of God's creation.
May all people find relief from struggle and pain.

May our compassion and hope radiate to all forms of life.
And may our faithful witness be for the healing of the world.

Continue breathing, imagining that with each exhale, you are widening your circle of concern, to include the whole world, from those closest to you to those furthest away.

When you are ready, set an intention for how you would participate in today's session...and slowly return your awareness to this community gathered.

SLIDE 11 – LEARNING TOGETHER

Leader: In this session, we are exploring how Episcopal Relief & Development helps communities nurture healthy children under age six and why the first 1,000 days of a child's life are so important to their overall development.

SLIDE 12 – THE LESSON

Leader: Read aloud.

SLIDES 13-14 – PROTECTING HEALTH AND PREVENTING DISEASE

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 15 – EMPOWERING PARENTS

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 16 – PROTECTING PARENTS

Leader: Read or invite someone to read the description.

SLIDE 17 – INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEO

Leader: Let's take a look at how these priorities play out in community. Video is less than three minutes.

SLIDE 18 – USING MUTUAL INVITATION FOR SHARING

To ensure that everyone who wants to share has the opportunity to speak, we will proceed in the following way:

- The leader or a designated person will share first. After that person has spoken, he or she then invites another to share. After the next person has spoken, that person is given the privilege to invite another to share.
- If you are not ready to share yet, say, "I pass for now," and we will invite you to share later on. If you don't want to say anything at all, simply say, "I pass," and proceed to invite another to share. We will do this until everyone has been invited.

The Mutual Invitation Process is used as a catalyst to encourage all who wish to share to do so. As group members become more accustomed to using this tool, they make connections with everyone in the session because they invite each speaker by name. When Mutual Invitation is used, it encourages deep and holy listening to one another because there is no conversation until everyone has spoken once.

SLIDE 19 – QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - YOUTH

Leader: Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

SLIDE 20 – QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION - ADULT

Leader: Offer your response first and then select the next participant to share (i.e., mutual invitation.)

SLIDE 21 – GROUP REFLECTION/BRAINSTORM

Leader: Invite the group to brainstorm ideas for ongoing learning and action (popcorn style.)

SLIDE 22 – PRAY

Leader: Remind the group of their commitment to ongoing prayer (Rule of Life.)

SLIDE 23 – CLOSING PRAYER

Leader: Invite participants to pray together.

SLIDE 24 – AT HOME

Leader: Encourage participants to discover additional online resources in their favorite learning modalities.

Ted Talk: (<https://bit.ly/3Pgy5tC>)

Art: (<https://bit.ly/3yLiGMb>)

Poetry: (<https://bit.ly/3kx3w8k>)

SLIDE 25 – EPISCOPAL RELIEF & DEVELOPMENT

Leader: Thank you for your participation and support of this important work.

Lectio Divina Bible Study for Leaders

As your leadership team is forming, this Bible study in the style of *Lectio Divina* might be a useful tool. Designed for individual or group use, it focuses on how light, peace and justice are central to the care of children.

Scripture: Matthew 5:14-16

Author & Presenter: Vijula Arulanantham from Sri Lanka

Sit for a few moments in quiet stillness. Focus on your breathing, taking slow, deep breaths. Try to turn your focus away from outside thoughts and simply focus on your breathing. Sit in quiet for as long as you would like.

When you are ready, read the following passage of scripture. As you read, allow the ear of your heart to listen for a word or phrase that resonates with you.

"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lamp stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

— Matthew 5:14-16

After you have completed the reading, allow that word or phrase to resound within you. If you are in a group, take turns sharing only that word or phrase.

Repeat the word or phrase you have chosen in prayerful silence.

After a short period of reflection, read the scripture a second time. This time, reflect on any thoughts or feelings that come up for you while reading the scripture again. What might God be asking you through the reading of this scripture?

After reading for a second time, take a few moments in silence to continue this personal reflection.

When you are ready, watch [this video](#) featuring a personal reflection from one of Episcopal Relief & Development's partners.

Consider how you and those on your leadership team are inspired to come together and partner with the work of Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development initiatives locally and through our [website](#).



In Worship: Prayers, Liturgies & Devotions

How we pray shapes what we believe. This ancient concept is lived out when we offer to God our hopes and dreams for children and those who care for them.

Giving our youngest community members a voice and agency in worship is another way to care for them, build their self-awareness as children of God and practice the faith of their people. The new Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday's Children's Chapel in this section encourages handing over the beauty of our worship to our youngest members and watching it flourish in their care.

We're also sharing a delightful creche activity for use in a classroom, at an intergenerational Advent Event, or to send home with families. Also appropriate for use in Epiphany, it reflects on the gifts the child Jesus was given and how they inform what all children need to grow.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Building Blocks for Children's Chapel: Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday*
- » *Building Blocks for Intergenerational Worship: Collects, Prayers of the People, a Homily*
- » *Resources for Special and Seasonal Observances:*
 - » *Back-to-School Prayer*
 - » *St. Nicholas Day*
 - » *Advent Wreath Prayers & Devotions*
 - » *How to Observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday*

Additional Worship and Devotion resources, including the Daily Office, Compline, a Children's Litany and much more can be found on our website [here](#).

Building Blocks for Children's Chapel: Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

This service can be used on Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, the first Sunday in Lent or another Sunday that works in your church calendar.

Worshipping with Children in a Way That Parallels our Early Childhood Development Goals

Episcopal Relief & Development's flagship program partnership for Early Childhood Development is called *Moments That Matter®* ([MTM](#)). This program is founded on a shared community vision of children achieving their potential, fueled by positive, self-reinforcing dynamics taught to parents and caregivers.

This kind of strong parental care and nurturing, developed in early childhood, fosters agency and curiosity by creating secure attachments, providing responsive interactions and encouraging exploration and learning. Ultimately, this builds confidence and a sense of competence in children.

This Children's Chapel resource builds on those foundations. The age-appropriate opportunities for adaptation, celebration and leadership roles, even small ones, affirm children's sense of agency and self-efficacy.

The best Children's Chapel models are those that give children a sense of the rhythm of worship and confidence in their place in the stories, the space and the listening. They are self-aware of their own identity as one who prays, listens and makes confession — and as people who participate in worship in community with friends and strangers.

Creatively Incorporating This Resource

Children's Chapels vary from place to place. Many have music and movement, periods of storytelling, time for silence and responses through art. This resource is designed with a variety of elements. Select those that fit best into the framework of your current Children's Chapel or Liturgy of the Word. If you do not currently have a Children's Chapel, you should be able to craft a service with the provided resources.

You may also find these materials useful as worship elements in your Sunday School and Christian formation offerings.

If you read storybooks during your Children's Chapel at the time when the sermon typically occurs, we offer three recommendations — and trust that you will select the title(s) that make the most sense for your community.

If you prefer an object lesson, we have provided an example along with a sample sermon and recommendations for those who use this element in their worship with children.

What is the Liturgy of the Word?

In the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer, the liturgy provided for the principal worship service happening most Sunday Mornings is called “The Holy Eucharist.”

The first part of the service usually includes the entrance rite, scripture lessons, including the psalm and Gospel, sermon, Nicene Creed, prayers of the people, confession of sin and absolution and the peace. This part of the service can be referred to as the Liturgy of the Word. The second portion of the service may be called the Liturgy of the Table. This section includes the offertory, consecration of the bread and wine in the Great Thanksgiving, communion of the people, concluding prayers of thanksgiving, a blessing and dismissal.

Many weekday school chapels and faith communities offer a Liturgy of the Word for children. On Sundays, it's typically held in a designated space separate from the main worship service. Often called “Chapel” or “Children’s Chapel,” this is a time set aside for younger members, typically ages 4-9, to begin to embrace the rhythms and words of the first part of the worship service. Following this Children’s Chapel, which runs between 20-40 minutes, participants normally process to the nave, or wherever the rest of the congregation is worshipping, in time to join them for the Liturgy of the Table.

Tips for Children’s Chapel Implementation

If your children gather in the Children’s Chapel space (rather than being escorted out of a different space mid-worship), recruit children and youth to take on leadership roles as they arrive. Some Children’s Chapels have these leadership roles printed out in large font on cardstock, reusable each week, ready for participants to volunteer, be assigned or choose as they arrive.

In this resource, designated worship leader roles include **Candle prayers, Opening prayer, Statement of faith** and **Prayers of the People**. It is recommended that you print out the text, including the *rubric* (helpful directions). Go over the rubrics and words carefully with the children volunteers so they will feel confident to be ready to lead when the time comes. The leadership of the confession stones requires a bit of gravity, so this role is typically best held by an adult.

You may have several leadership roles for Children’s Chapel already such as vergers for leading the processions, altar guild for setting the space, someone to mark the Sunday on the calendar of the church year, storytellers, a schedule for readers or intercessors, etc. Again, this varies from place to place.

The presider for your Children’s Chapel should have a script of the entire service with notes about the names of leaders for each segment. As with most liturgy, the more familiar and confident the leaders are with the flow of the service, the more welcoming and worshipful it will be for those who gather.

The Calendar of the Church Year

Many Children's Chapels begin worship by marking Sunday's progress. This can be done with calendar blocks, charts or other resources. A popular option is a chart with wheels that has colored tabs for each Sunday, as made popular by Godly Play™.



Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday is recommended for use on the first Sunday in Lent, but you are welcome to observe it on any Sunday of your choosing. Simply point out the Sunday and its formal name (e.g., "the Fourth Sunday in Epiphany"), and then say something like:

"Today, we are observing Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. We do this (every year) to say thank you to people just like us, all over the world, who are helping their neighbors be safe and to learn more about how we can join them in this work."

Prepare the Space

Claiming the space as holy — and as the children's — is another important element in Children's Chapels. Setting the focus table or altar helps the participants shift from gathering to worship. Seasonal items, colored cloths, flowers and natural items like shells, beach glass or small bits of driftwood and battery candles should be arranged neatly on shelves nearby, within reach of the children. Once everyone is seated, invite a child to apply the fabric that goes with the season on the focus table or altar. Then, starting with the youngest child, invite them one at a time to select something from the shelf to add to the table. If they don't want to, that's fine. Not all items need to be put out every week. If you are doing the Candle Prayer or Confession Stones, make sure those materials are placed on the table within reach of the leaders including the pitcher of water for the absolution.

Light Candles

Once the table is all set and the space is ready, light a long taper candle with a match or lighter. Use that candle to light the first candle on the focus table/altar, then say:

"We light candles to help us focus on God's light, which shows us how to help others. Thank you, God, for this light."

Turn to the person next to you, hand them a lit taper or battery-power candle, and say:

"Now, it is your turn. When you light your candle, say, 'Thank you God, for this light,' then pass the candle on to the next person."

If a younger child needs assistance, help them guide the flame to the wick.

Continue until all candles are lit and placed back on the focus table/altar. Receive the original candle from the last person and place in designated holder on the altar/focus table.

OPENING PRAYER

When the candles are lit, begin the opening prayer:

Leader: Let's gather our hearts and minds together with this opening prayer. Please repeat after me:

God who surrounds us *God who surrounds us*
 God who fills our hearts *God who fills our hearts*
 God who gives us friends *God who gives us friends*
 Thank you for this morning *Thank you for this morning*
 Help us know you more and more *Help us know you more and more*
 Amen. *Amen.*

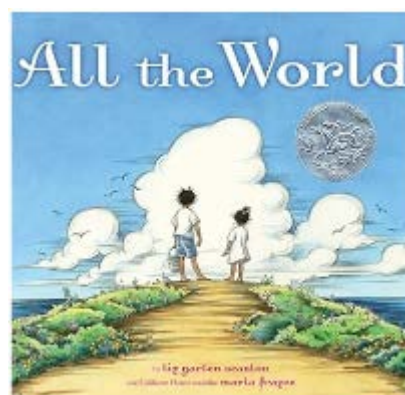
Options for Storybooks, an Object Lesson, a Sample Sermon and Godly Play™ Story Recommendations

Leader: Please be seated. We will begin with a reading from the Bible, followed by a story.

"ALL THE WORLD" BY LIZ GARTON SCANLON AND MARLA FRAZEE

Today's reading is from the very first part of the very first book in the Bible. Because it is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, we are thinking about what we can do to make sure families all over the world, including in our own town, have everything they need. Here is the reading:

"God said, 'Look, I have given you all the plants that have grain for seeds. And I have given you all the trees whose fruits have seeds in them. They will be food for you. I have given all the green plants to all the animals to eat. They will be food for every wild animal, every bird of the air and every small crawling animal.' And it happened. God looked at everything that was made, and it was very good" (Genesis 1:29-31, International Children's Bible-ICB)



About the storybook: The text in this book is a poem about the interconnectedness of the world and those who live in it. The pictures are large, beautiful and full of wonderful details. Genesis reminds us that God created the world and all that is in it and calls humankind to participate with joy and care in the life that we share with others on the earth. The world is both awe-inspiring in its vastness and also the place where small, quiet acts of connectedness and joy take place.

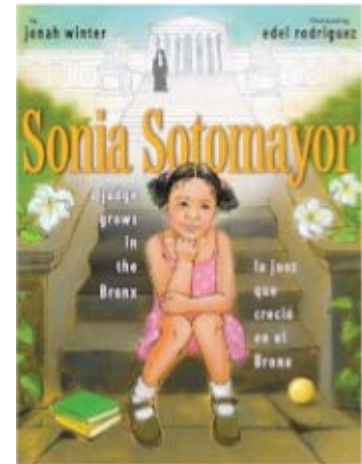
Questions for Discussion:

1. Did you see any pictures that remind you of things you love to do and make you happy?
2. Did you see people doing things that help each other and show God's love for each other?
3. Did you see people doing things that help us care for the earth?

“A JUDGE GROWS IN THE BRONX” BY JONAH WINTER AND EDEL RODRIGUEZ

Today’s reading is from the book of Hebrews. Because it is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, we are thinking about how moms and people all over the world take care of the babies and toddlers in their communities. We have learned that adults can learn special ways to take care of very young children, which gives them a better chance to grow up happy and safe. Here is the reading:

“So we have many people of faith around us. Their lives tell us what faith means. So let us run the race that is before us and never give up. We should remove from our lives anything that would get in the way” (Hebrews 12:1, ICB).



About the storybook: Before Sonia Sotomayor took her seat as a justice in the Supreme Court, our nation’s highest court, she was just a little girl in the South Bronx. Justice Sotomayor didn’t have a lot growing up, but she had what she needed: her mother’s love, a will to learn and her own determination. With bravery she became the person she wanted to be. With a little sunlight and a modest plot from which to grow, Justice Sotomayor bloomed for the whole world to see.

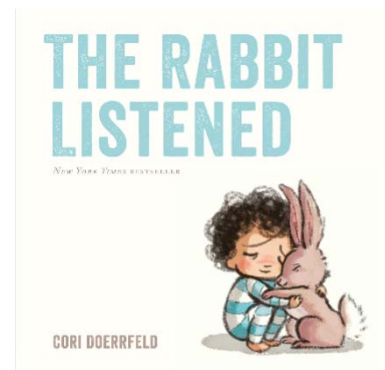
Questions for Discussion:

1. Why did Sonia’s mother work so many long hours at her job?
2. Were there times when you wish someone would have been nicer to Sonia?
3. Who are the grown-ups in your world who help keep you and other children safe?

“THE RABBIT LISTENED” BY CORI DOERRFELD

Today’s reading is from a book in the Bible called Isaiah. It is the story of God’s dream for all of us as understood by the prophet Isaiah. Because it is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, we are thinking about people who live in places where things like war or bad weather can make things really difficult and sad for the people who live there. That includes us sometimes! The helpers from Episcopal Relief & Development go to the towns and families that need help and they listen carefully for ways to make a difference. Here is the reading:

“The Lord God gave me the ability to teach, and taught me what to say to make the weak strong. Every morning I wake up and am reminded — I must listen — like a student. The Lord God helps me learn, and I have not turned against God; I have not stopped following God” (Isaiah 50:4-5, ICB).



About the storybook: When something sad happens, Taylor doesn't know where to turn. All the animals are sure they have the answer. The chicken wants to talk it out, but Taylor doesn't feel like chatting. The bear thinks Taylor should get angry, but that's not quite right either. One by one, the animals try to tell Taylor how to act, and one by one, they fail to offer comfort. Then the rabbit arrives.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Why was Taylor sad?
2. Have you ever had someone try to help you, but they didn't seem to care about your feelings? How did listening to Taylor help them feel better?

Seeds of Hope: An Object Lesson

This lesson offers a way to teach young children about Episcopal Relief & Development, which helps people who need the right conditions to grow and thrive.

1. Gather your materials

- A small bag or container of different types of seeds (beans, sunflower seeds, etc.)
- Soil or potting mix
- Small pots or cups
- Water
- A small watering can or spray bottle
- Pictures of the work Episcopal Relief & Development does (provided at the end of this lesson for you to download and print)

2. Start the lesson

Begin by asking the children what they know about seeds and how they grow.

Explain that just like seeds need the right conditions (sun, water, soil) to grow, people also need certain things to live healthy and happy lives.

Share the pictures from Episcopal Relief & Development and read the captions. They show people around the world helping each other, providing the things they need to grow and thrive, like clean water, gardens and healthy families.

3. Show and tell

Hold up the bag of seeds and say,

"These seeds are like the hopes and dreams of Episcopal Relief & Development and the people they partner with to make lasting change around the world."

Explain that, just like seeds need the right conditions to grow and things like soil, water and pots, Episcopal Relief & Development works with people, and together they find the things they need to grow: support from their neighbors, education, sometimes even money and always, prayers.

4. Plant the seeds

Time permitting, have the children scoop planting soil into the containers. (You might prepare these in advance to save time.) Then, help the children plant the seeds in the pots and water them gently.

Explain that just like we need to take care of these seeds, Episcopal Relief & Development helps people take care of themselves and their communities.

5. Wrap up

Ask the children what they learned about Episcopal Relief & Development and how they can help.

Encourage them to think about how they can be “seeds of hope” in their own communities by helping others.

6. Closing Prayer

Loving God, guide and strengthen the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, that their service with people everywhere, including us, may bring healing, hope and justice to all in need, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen

Gospel Reading(s) and Sample Sermon

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, GOSPEL READINGS

Year A: Matthew 4:1-11: Jesus in the Wilderness, tempted with bread, loyalty and power

Year B: Mark 1:9-15: Jesus is baptized, Spirit drives him into the wilderness, he’s tempted, John is arrested, Jesus begins his ministry in Galilee (shortest reading but packed with events)

Year C: Luke 4:1-13: (After the baptism) Wilderness, Jesus faces three temptations again.

Today’s reading tells us that the Spirit led Jesus out into the wilderness following his baptism. Who remembers being or seeing someone baptized? (hands) What do you think those people who were just baptized did right after the service? (went home, went to lunch, had cake at church)

But Jesus went right out into the wilderness! Who knows where the wilderness is? (a forest, the desert, the woods)

Jesus knew that being baptized meant that he was now claimed by God as a part of God’s family. So now it was time to think about how he was going to live and act. The wilderness Jesus went into was the

nearby desert. Like all other wilderness areas, there wasn't really anyone else out there, and there weren't any buildings or paths or other people around. And because he was in the desert, it was sandy and hot without plants for food and shade. Jesus stayed there for forty days. Stories tell us that even though he was tempted to make choices that sounded like they would help him, he knew they would actually be bad for him. So even though it was hard, Jesus made the right choice. Stories also tell us that he was surrounded by angels and animals who came to help him.

Jesus found out, in a very hard place — the wilderness — that when he spent time alone with God, he could really think and pray about what he was supposed to do. He also found that even in the hardest places, he could always count on the helpers around him.

We usually tell the story about Jesus in the desert on the first Sunday of the season of Lent. That's because between then and Easter morning, there are forty days! Can you believe it? So, just like Jesus did, we have forty days to think about what it means to be a part of God's family. Also, we can use this time to really focus on where we need help loving ourselves and each other. We need to remember that, like Jesus, we are not alone, we are loved and we will be okay — even when we make mistakes.

You might hear people say they are giving up something for Lent. They are choosing to do without something they really like for forty days. They usually give up something like candy, eating meat or video games. And even though what people choose to give up during Lent isn't really hard, they do it to remind themselves that Jesus had a hard time in the desert during those forty days.

Another way people remember the forty days is by doing something differently. People wake up early each day to read or say special prayers. Instead of staying home, they might spend an evening each week at church hearing stories about Jesus, making food for each other or setting aside time to make cards for people who are feeling alone. Or maybe they will decide to be helpers like the angels and animals were with Jesus to people in need.

Episcopal Relief & Development is an organization that helps us be better helpers around the world. They go into the towns and farms and homes of people who need help and listen carefully to their stories. They learn about their schools and favorite foods and the kinds of music and crafts they enjoy making. Then, they help people organize these blessings into things like shops and schools, gardens and farms, so they can continue to help each other grow and be well.

We are all able to do things that help others. Raise your hand if you can do any of these things: sing, paint, cook, pray, read, listen, dance or walk with another person. There might be people you know right now who feel like they are all alone in a sort of wilderness. Let's spend the next forty days thinking about this just like Jesus did. Let's figure out where we can use our ability to love and help others.

Godly Play™ Story Recommendations

Many Children's Chapels use Godly Play™ stories or that type of storytelling method. Here are recommended wondering questions you could add to stories to connect them to the work of Episcopal Relief & Development. The story of Jesus in the Wilderness is the Gospel assigned for the first Sunday of Lent, which is the recommended day for observing Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. If you choose a different season to observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, here are some wondering questions for different stories.

Jesus in the Wilderness: When we are hungry, getting bread feels really good. I wonder how we can listen to stories about hunger and help ensure that we always have enough bread to eat.

The Mystery of Easter (Lenten Puzzle): Sometimes, even when we are happy and safe and our bellies are full, we see people in our neighborhoods who seem to be lost or hungry or need help. I wonder how we could get to know them so we could work together to help them and others who are in trouble.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan: I wonder if seeing this person receive so much help from a stranger inspires you to join in helping people even if you don't know them.

The Flood: I wonder if you, or someone you know, has been in a place where you were afraid you weren't going to be okay. Maybe you felt underwater or lost or had an accident? How can we remind ourselves and others that God is with us, even when it's scary?

After the sermon, book or story conversation, it's time for the...

STATEMENT OF FAITH

Leader: It's time for us to share our statement of faith.

I will say what we believe about God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

You will reply by simply saying after each one with the words, "Thank you, God," then "Thank you, Jesus," then "Thank you, Holy Spirit."

We believe in God, who made everything.

Thank you, God.

We believe in Jesus, God's son, who loves us.

Thank you, Jesus.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who is always with us helping us to love and are for each other.

Thank you, Holy Spirit.

After the Statement of Faith, it's time for the...

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Leader: It's time to offer the prayers of the people. "The people" means **all** of us, so you are invited to add your prayers, too. When we are praying for our families, you can name your brother, sister, grandparents or anyone in your family. If we are praying for leaders, you can name your teachers, school crossing guards, scout leaders or any other people who help show you the way.

And since this is Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday, we are offering special prayers to help us help others and to make lasting changes for children and their communities all over the world.

So, listen carefully to what we are praying about, and then you can add whatever you would like. When each part is finished, you will hear, "Lord, in your love," and we will all say together, "Hear our prayer."

Leader: God, we pray for the church and for those who lead us, especially our Presiding Bishop Sean, our Bishop ____ and (*local community faith leaders, at your discretion*). Help us all work together to love and care for one another.

Are there other people who lead us here in church that you would like to pray for? (wait)

Lord in your love;
Hear our prayer.

We pray for presidents, mayors, principals, police officers, teachers, parents and all other leaders throughout the world. Help us all work together to find ways to provide safety, shelter and education for everyone. Are there other leaders you would like to pray for? (wait)

Lord in your love;
Hear our prayer.

We pray for anyone who is poor, sick, hungry or sad. We pray for babies everywhere to be taken care of, for women and girls to be safe and for people to be able to find homes when theirs are ruined by fire or weather. Please help all of us in times of need and trouble. Are there people who are in trouble or sad for whom you would like to pray? (wait)

Lord in your love;
Hear our prayer.

We thank you for family, friends and pets who have been our companions and playmates and loved us in our lives who have now died. God, we ask that you continue to care for them. Please help us be loving and kind to ourselves and to everyone in this life. Are there people or pets who have died for whom you would like to pray? (wait)

Lord in your love;
Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for the many awesome gifts and blessings in this world. For the work of Episcopal Relief & Development, who help people in need. For sunshine and music and toys and food. Are there gifts and blessings and other things you are so happy about that you would like to tell God thank you? (wait)

Lord in your love;
Hear our prayer.

Following the Prayers of the People, it is time for the...

CONFESSION STONES

Leader: Now, it's time for our confessions. Please stand, pick up a stone from the table and place it next to your hearts. The stones help us remember the things we do that hurt those we love or even ourselves. (Wait until everyone is ready, then say)

Leader: Repeat after me. God, have mercy.
People: God have mercy.

Leader: We often hurt those we most love.
People: We often hurt those we most love.

Leader: We will do more to bring kindness to the world.
People: We will do more to bring kindness to the world.

Leader: We are sorry, God. Please forgive us.
People: We are sorry, God. Please forgive us.

Leader: Help us to be as forgiving as Jesus and to love like Jesus.
People: Help us to be as forgiving as Jesus and to love like Jesus.

The community places their stones in the bowl.

Absolution: During the following, the Leader will pour water over the stones.

Leader: Through the water of our baptism, God forgives us and loves us. As this water has washed the stones, God washes away our hurts. God forgives you. Forgive others. Forgive yourself. Be at peace.
Amen.
People: AMEN.

Leader: It's time to go to the second part of our worship this morning. _____ will meet us at the door with the cross and will lead us to (the narthex), where we will wait quietly to enter the Liturgy of the Table. Before we go, let's exchange the Peace. I will say, "The Peace of the Lord be always with you," and you will say back to me, "And also with you." Then, you will share the same words with each other.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

People: And also with you.

The people exchange the peace as they make their way to line up at the door.

A Note about Music:

A quick search on the internet can provide hundreds of ideas for short, repetitive songs that work great in Children's Chapel. Here is one fun example:

https://youtu.be/skY_9BGMB_I

God made the sun (raise your arms above your head).

And God made the seas (put your hands in front of you and roll them up and down like the waves).

God made the fishes (put your hands together and move them back and forth like a fish swimming).

And God made me (point to yourself).

Thank you, God for the sun, (repeat from above).

Thank you, God for the seas (repeat from above).

Thank you, God, for the fishes (repeat from above).

And thank you, God, for me (repeat from above).



Tree planting in The Philippines. Episcopal Relief & Development helped congregations with tree planting activities, planting 6,700 seedlings to help stop erosion and grow shade trees.



Healthy children in Malawi. Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Anglican Council in Malawi to provide health volunteers who are trained to support families.



Savings and food security for families in Honduras. Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Episcopal Diocese of Honduras' development agency focusing on economic development and education.



Clean water in Ghana. Episcopal Relief & Development partners with the Anglican Diocesan Development and Relief Organization in Ghana to help provide clean water for school children.

Building Blocks for Intergenerational Worship: Collects, Prayers of the People, a Homily

Written by Emily Keniston and the Rev. Katie Holicky

COLLECTS

To be used for Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship

God who is love, we pray in thanksgiving for the ways you nurture us. We pray for children everywhere and for the grown-ups who care for them that they, with open hearts, continue to look, listen and feel for ways to grow, learn, share and give. *Amen.*

God who is always with us, we pray for healthy food to eat, beautiful music that moves us, relationships that bond us, for play with friends and grown-ups and for the gift of listening. Thank you for these ways to care for each other and inspire us to continue to share in your love. *Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For Children

Let us pray for the life of the world...

For our loved ones ... those whom we know and hold in our hearts, and all of your children across the world. Bond us in your love. God of love, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our parents and family at home and in all places we learn. Help us to listen with patience as we grow. God our teacher, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns and communities wisdom to serve people in love and peace. Give us all the language to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... we pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable^{vi}, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... we give thanks for playing with friends and grown-ups, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

^{vi} The word vulnerable is included as it is important for children's understanding of the Gospel message. Our suggestion is that it also be included and defined in other places in the liturgy and formation.

CLOSING COLLECT

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world. Help us to keep courage as we learn, share, and give. *Amen.*

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

For Intergenerational Worship

Let us pray for the life of the world...

For our loved ones ... those whom we know and hold in our hearts and all of your children who are unknown to us but always known to you. Help us keep the needs of all, especially the youngest amongst us, in our prayers. Bond us through your love and inspire us to action alongside the voiceless. God of love, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who teach us... our teachers at school and church, our family at home and in all places we learn and grow. Help us to listen and pray with patience as we learn from God and one another. God our teacher, **Receive our prayer.**

For those who lead us... give the leaders of our nations, towns, communities and homes wisdom to serve people of all ages in love and peace. Give us all the language and intention to share your love in the world. God who guides us, **Receive our prayer.**

For the sick and poor... we pray for access that meets the needs of those who do not have enough. For nutritious food, housing, loving relationships and all of the things that help us to thrive. God of the vulnerable, **Receive our prayer.**

For ourselves... we give thanks for play, for music that moves us and all of the good things you bless us with. Inspire us to dwell in the stories of others and respond to the needs of our neighbors as you have taught us. God who walks with us, **Receive our prayer.**

CLOSING COLLECT

God, we thank you for always being with us. Open and transform our hearts that we might connect more deeply with the needs of others and be moved to be your love and care in the world.

Help us to keep courage as we learn, share and give. *Amen.*

CLOSING SONG

Suggested Playlist

Songs

"Bare Necessities" from Disney's "The Jungle Book"

"What the World Needs Now Is Love"

"Happy" by Pharrell Williams

"Can't Stop This Feeling" by Justin Timberlake (from the "Trolls" movie)

"Count on Me" by Bruno Mars

"What a Wonderful World" by Louis Armstrong

"Lean on Me" by Bill Withers

"Best Day of My Life" by American Authors

Hymns

"Sweet, Sweet Spirit"

"This Little Light of Mine"

"We Are Marching in the Light of God"

"I Have Decided to Follow Jesus"

"Morning Has Broken"

Rosemary, a volunteer with Anglican Council in Malawi holds a participant's child during a home visit. Moments That Matter® enables parents to address children's cognitive, psychosocial and physical development needs while also equipping communities to support their healthy development.



Sample Homily: For Children's Chapel or Intergenerational Worship

Written by Lisa Puccio

Jesus began his ministry after he was baptized by John in the River Jordan, and that's when our ministry begins, too. When we're baptized, we are made ready to serve God. Even if we are just babies, our baptism makes us part of God's family and turns us into his helpers.

When we're baptized, the people who love us make promises with us and for us to do the work that Jesus taught people to do. We promise to respect and love our neighbors, to follow Jesus and to help those in need. These are important and serious promises, but God gives us people to help us keep these promises.

Today, we're going to think about neighbors who we will probably never meet but are part of God's big family. Children around the world want to grow up healthy and strong, and their families love them just like your family loves you. But not everyone has the things they need to grow up healthy and strong, and that's when we can help be good neighbors.

Children and grown-ups need healthy food and people to love. We all need someone to listen to us and someone to play with. We need music and laughter, friends, hugs and prayers. Most of us have the things we need, and there are people who work to help everyone have the things they need. These helpers go around the world to be teachers and friends to families who want to learn about growing up safe and strong. We can help, too, by praying for children and families who are missing the things they need.

Praying is a good way to be a helper and a good way to keep your promise to God. You can also tell your friends that you are praying for children and families who need help. You can be thankful for all the things that you have and learn about how people around the world grow and learn in different ways.

Our church, and other churches like ours, are helpers, too. We send money and prayers to Episcopal Relief & Development. In this way, we can share with families who are learning to grow and be healthy. The people who work for Episcopal Relief & Development want us to all work together to know our neighbors better.

We are all part of God's big family. Be thankful for neighbors we haven't ever met, who live far away but know that we care about them.

Resources for Special and Seasonal Observances

Back-to-School Prayer

O Lord, as our children return to school, we pray for the safety of all students, teachers, administrators and staff. We pray for strength to comfort the fearful and face the challenges ahead. Surround parents and caregivers with peace to ease any anxiety about reentering the buildings. Give our children patience to deal with new rules as they renew friendships and develop new relationships in safe ways. Encourage parents and caregivers to nurture children at day's end so that they may thrive another day in school. We pray for churches to surround all those in schools with more prayer and support this year than ever before so that all children reach their full potential. *Amen.*

St. Nicholas Day

Written by Lisa Puccia

Saint Nicholas is honored on December 6. This feast may be an opportunity to connect the gift-giving of Santa Claus with the generosity of one of the saints of the church.

"Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven."

— Matthew 6:1

LEARN

Who was St. Nicholas?

The true story of Santa Claus begins with Nicholas, who was born during the third century in the village of Patara in Asia Minor. At the time, the area was considered part of Greece; today, the village is on the southern coast of Turkey. Nicholas's wealthy parents, who raised him to be a devout Christian, died in an epidemic while he was still young. Obeying Jesus's words to "sell what you own and give the money to the poor," Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Bishop Nicholas became known throughout the land for his generosity to those in need, his love for children and his concern for sailors and ships. [Read more here.](#)

Ways to Engage:

- [Find Myra and Turkey](#), where Saint Nicholas lived, on a globe or map.
- Help children learn about the difference between St. Nicholas and Santa Claus. St. Nicholas was a real person who lived hundreds of years ago. Many people around the world celebrate his life and good deeds on December 6. This is a day to think more about giving than receiving!
- Adults and older teens can learn about helping the poor today. Another saint who modeled how to help the poor was [Basil of Caesarea](#).

SHARE

Especially for Older Children and Youth

- Do you like origami? Make [St. Nicholas' bishop's miter](#) and use them to decorate your house or add them to St. Nicholas treat bags and Christmas gifts.
- This can be a great day for older children and youth to better understand the story of St. Nicholas. Watch [this short video](#) about how to "become" St. Nicholas. The video shows how to become St. Nicholas every day by making simple acts of kindness a routine. Start on St. Nicholas Day with some special "Nicholas Deeds."
- Post a St. Nicholas image on social media or in a text stream to let others know you are celebrating the life of St. Nicholas. You can choose from [one of these](#) or choose another. Nicholas gave secret gifts to those in need and people he cared about. Plan a day of sharing the story of this beloved saint!
- Make gift bags for neighbors for older folks in your community and plan a way to leave them on their porch or doorstep when no one is looking.
- St. Nicholas Treat Bag. You can decorate your own or find [a fancy one](#). Fill the bag with gold-wrapped chocolate coins (a reminder of Nicholas's many gifts of gold coins to the needy), a candy cane (a sweet treat shaped like the bishop's crozier), and a St. Nicholas prayer.

St. Nicholas Prayer:

God of joy and cheer, we thank you for your servant,
the good bishop Nicholas.
In loving the poor, he showed us your kindness;
in caring for your children, he revealed your love.
Make us thoughtful without need of reward
so that we, too, may be good followers of Jesus. *Amen.*

GIVE

- As a family, make a list of what you would buy if you had \$15. In the [Gifts for Life](#) catalog, you can spend \$15 to help support a caregiver in Africa, Asia or Latin America. Instead of purchasing items on your list, share that \$15 with those in need.
- Oranges signify the gold St. Nicholas gave away to the poor. At this time of year when oranges aren't in season, they were once considered a rare winter treat. Donate a case of oranges to your local food pantry.
- Begin or end your day with a [3-minute retreat](#) that will help you put the holiday season in perspective and leave you inspired by the life of St. Nicholas.



Episcopal Relief & Development has been partnering with the Zambia Anglican Council (ZACOP) to create safe spaces for children to grow and thrive. The program's holistic approach leverages the churches' networks and volunteers to organize communities, support parents and caregivers and provide stimulation and enrichment for young children.

Advent Wreath Prayers & Devotions

Episcopal Relief & Development offers a variety of ways to help individuals and communities observe the season of Advent. Our [Advent Toolkit](#) provides weekly prayers and activities for children, families and adults. For this season of giving, we also offer an alternative gift market, a fun way to enjoy fellowship, do some community building, and give gifts. [Here](#) is a model designed specifically for the season of Advent.

Here are some other options for engagement:

Wreaths

Ideas for Advent wreaths and prayers for children and families, including ways to make simple wreaths can be found DIY [here](#). These resources are also available in Spanish [here](#) and [here](#).

How can you, as an individual, a family or a congregation, make a significant change in the lives of children this Advent?

Prayers

A Reflection for Adults: As you light your Advent wreath each week, [this printable resource](#) will guide your hearts through sharing, giving and praying about the coming of Jesus as a child, again. You are invited to reflect on the joy and wonder of children in our lives and around the world and to join us in making lasting change through our early childhood initiatives.

Devotions

There are a number of Advent studies, stories and devotions on our website to choose from.

Learn about the practice of **Christkindl** in [this reflection](#) on observing Advent written by Chad Brinkman, Director of Faith Fundraising at Episcopal Relief & Development.

A devotion on **The Advent Paradox** written by Sean McConnell, Senior Director, Faith & Community Engagement at Episcopal Relief & Development, can be found on our website [here](#). He writes, "The challenge for us [is] to celebrate the story of God acting in a specific, self-revelatory instant and to share the message that Christ is always present."

Almighty God, as we await the coming of the Christ child and prepare to sing of "peace on earth, goodwill to all," help us to remember that our own peace must be bound in the peace of all your children on earth. Open our eyes and our hearts during this season of joy and giving that we would treat every child as lovingly as we welcome the Savior, born a child, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

How to Observe Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday

Praying together as a community of faith amplifies the power of our prayers, reinforces our desire to be healing agents of God's world and reminds us to give thanks for opportunities to do so.

The Episcopal Church [designated](#) the first Sunday in Lent as "Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday." Every year, faith communities are encouraged to celebrate and partner with our lifesaving work on this or another convenient Sunday.

If you or your faith community have made the theme of this toolkit a part of your expressed priorities for a season, feel free to adapt the prayers and readings for this observance. Doing so will raise awareness of your partnership with Episcopal Relief & Development and invite others into the ongoing work of your team.

Consider setting up a display or informational table during fellowship, scheduling a presentation at a forum or study group or perhaps holding a special event to heighten this ministry.

Resources to help you with this observation, including prayers, petitions, proper prefaces, and more, can be found on our website under Church Resources and at [this link](#). Sample sermons are available on Vimeo [here](#).

You will also find a link that takes you to [Forward Movement](#), where you can order complimentary resources for your observance, including beautiful informational bulletin inserts and fliers, pew envelopes, *Gifts for Life* catalogs, beautiful bookmarks and brochures and Hope Chest boxes.

"When we are privileged to experience the genuine love of God, we are compelled to enthusiastically and freely give it to others. And when we do, we can overcome every manner of evil. We experience God's love through daily choosing to see Christ in the other, loving our neighbor as ourselves. It is an intentional practice. It is not easy, but it is my hope for each of us that we can pass God's love on to all."

— An Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday sermon by Chad Brinkman,
Director, Faith Fundraising, Episcopal Relief & Development



Formation: Study and Grow

This section features faith formation resources to teach about Early Childhood Development and Episcopal Relief & Development's integrated approach to [local solutions for communities](#) around the world. Here, you will find ideas and activities for children, teens and adults to use at home or in your church community.

In this section, you will find:

- » *Learn About Moments That Matter®*
- » *Acts of Love: With Children*
- » *Acts of Love: With Youth*
- » *Acts of Love: With Adults*
- » *Let's Talk: Conversation Starters*
- » *An Intergenerational Scavenger Hunts for All Ages*

Other ideas and resources include:

- [1,000 Second Challenge](#) — Pray, learn, share and give to Episcopal Relief & Development
- [Day of Love](#) — A day to reach out, thank someone and do something for children
- [Acts of Love Cards](#) — Cards to share an act of kindness
- [Acts of Love Bingo Card](#) — Acts of Love to share with your community
- [Coloring Book](#) — Based on FAMA (Facts, Associations, Meaning, Action) cards used by our program volunteers in the field
- [Conversations about Empathy and Abundance](#) — Originally designed for use in Easter eggs. Similar in substance to the "Let's Talk" cards, these conversation starter slips can be applied to all ages, in and outside of the home
- [Abundant Life Garden Project® Resources](#) — Children's faith formation program
- [DIY Advent Wreath Making](#) — A variety of ideas for creating this seasonal prayer tool
- [Nativity: Creche building & Blessing for Children](#) — Print and build your own nativity scene using rocks, blocks or craft sticks. Also includes accompanying storytelling and prayers for use during the season of Advent and a card activity teaching the "nine gifts of growth that every child needs."

Learn About *Moments That Matter*®

Moments That Matter® (MTM) is an early childhood development program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development focusing on children ages 0-3 when the quality of nurturing care children receive can affect them for the rest of their lives. MTM equips and supports parents and other primary caregivers, often in remote communities where information and resources about nurturing care are limited or nonexistent, and trains community leaders, including faith leaders, to support families with young children. This [Fact Sheet on Integrated Early Childhood Development](#) provides information about our strategic approach to Early Childhood Development programming in *Moments That Matter*®, including assessment data and program results.



The primary objectives of the program are:

Responsive Care & Early Learning: Teaching parents and caregivers the essential work of watching and tuning into a child's cues, figuring out what they really mean and responding to them in a sensitive way. This stimulates connections in the brain that affect the growth of a child. Lack of early stimulation can impact long-term potential.

Nutrition and Health: Access to nourishing food/nutrients and access to care, when needed, help children grow. This is not just about the absence of disease or ill health but also involves the provision of essential nutrients that prevent cognitive delays, stunting, blindness and death.

Physical Development: Safe environments and attentive adults give very young children opportunities to gain control over small muscles, including those needed to change position from lying down to sitting up or walking and picking up objects. This focus also helps children develop larger muscles used to walk or throw a ball and build a healthy body that gets stimulation and exercise.

Social and Emotional Development: This focus helps children learn how to develop relationships and get along with other children and adults as well as develop a sense of identity and self-esteem.

Communication Development: This gives children the ability to understand language, express ideas and learn how to read and write. Later in the toolkit, we have ways you can help with these objectives on a local level. You can also support the global work of *Moments That Matter*® [here](#).

Acts of Love: With Children

"Do everything in love."

— 1 Corinthians 16:14

This list offers simple ideas of ways children can engage in Acts of Love. When grown-ups encourage children to do these simple acts of love, they are not only teaching children about compassion but also about how easy it is to show love to others, even those they do not know.

Ask children, "How would you know if someone is having a bad day and may need a little extra love? What are some safe and simple ways to share love?"

AT HOME

- Clean your bedroom without being asked and say, "I wanted to do something special to say I love you."
- Call a grandparent to tell them you love them.
- Acknowledge that you care about the earth by helping recycle.
- Write notes or draw pictures of appreciation for every family member.
- Read a book to someone — in person or via social media.
- Help your sibling learn something new.

IN COMMUNITY

- Listen to someone tell you about their day. "I love you and want to hear about your day."
- Write an encouraging note with sidewalk chalk somewhere in your neighborhood.
- Hold the door for someone.
- Leave letters of encouragement on people's cars.
- Acknowledge that you care about people you don't know who are in need. Ask an adult to help you donate to a food bank.
- Smile at everyone who walks by.

IN THE WORLD

- Print and color a page of the [Color Our World coloring book](#) and mail it to a friend to share the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Create a special envelope or decorate a cup to use as a hope chest or bank. Put money in your hope chest every day for one month.
- Count the money you collected. Did you save enough to purchase from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#)?
- Ask a grown-up to help you donate the remaining money in your hope chest to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Acts of Love: With Youth

Teenagers can have lots of fun when it comes to random acts of love. Here are some ideas — but encourage teens to develop other creative ideas on their own.

AT HOME

- Choose a day not to complain.
- Sweep or vacuum the house without being asked.
- Clean your bedroom without being asked.
- Share an encouraging word for someone.
- Take a sibling outside to play.
- Make a family member breakfast.

IN COMMUNITY

- Ask an adult to help you hand out paper bags of granola bars, water and socks to people experiencing homelessness.
- Water your neighbor's lawn.
- Pay for the person behind you in the drive-thru.
- Wash the neighbor's car — with their permission, of course!
- Collect stuffed animals, towels or blankets to donate to an animal shelter.
- Paint kindness rocks and place them in random spots.

IN THE WORLD

- [Watch a video](#) describing Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.
- Launch a peer-to-peer [online fundraiser](#) for Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Design a DIY t-shirt or have one printed in various sizes. Sell them and invite friends to join you in giving to Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Film a YouTube video to share your random Acts of Love experience.
- Post your random Acts of Love on Instagram [#episcopalrelief](#).
- Count the money you collected for t-shirts. Did you save enough to shop from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#)? If not, go in with a friend who also saved. Consider purchasing a gift for moms and newborns.

Acts of Love: With Adults

Performing random acts of love and kindness humanize us; they lift us spiritually and they're good for us. Here are a few ideas to get you started.

AT HOME

- Write a note to an old teacher or another person who made a difference in your life.
- Thank a family member when they help wash the dishes.
- Pick up trash in your neighborhood.
- Mow your neighbor's lawn.
- Forgive someone.
- Say this prayer from The Social Justice Bible Challenge:

"Merciful God, your children cry to you night and day. Open our ears to hear their cries, open our eyes to see your love for all children; open our hearts to the work of transforming unjust systems. Increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love through your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

IN COMMUNITY

- Let someone merge in front of you in traffic.
- Buy groceries for a family in need.
- Wipe off your grocery cart and offer to the person behind you.
- Pay the adoption fee for a rescue animal.
- Drop off dinner for your neighbor
- Give a handwritten thank you note to the drive-thru bank teller.

IN THE WORLD

- [Watch a video](#) describing Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development work.
- Get permission from the leadership to lead a campaign initiative in your community. [Order complimentary Episcopal Relief & Development materials](#) through Forward Movement. Hand out or mail materials to church members.
- Invite friends and family to honor your birthday or anniversary by giving to [Episcopal Relief & Development](#).
- Order Christmas, Valentine's or other gifts from the [Gifts for Life catalog](#).
- [Become a sustainer](#) and give monthly to [Episcopal Relief & Development](#).
- Write a note to your Bishop asking their office to support you in launching a diocesan-wide fundraising campaign.



Carolina and her family receive fruit trees for their kitchen garden in the Aanglidesh area of Honduras.

Let's Talk: Family Conversation Starters

Legend:



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone

Let's Talk cards were created in response to requests from teens who wanted a framework to talk to their parents about important topics. Not just about relationships and school, but about what's going on in the world around them.

Let's Talk cards are composed to be open-ended, without a simple yes or no answer to create a time of storytelling. Sometimes parents and grandparents feel they must always have answers for children, but that's not true. A story that includes your feelings will connect you to your children much more than having a concrete answer. For instance, the Prayer card has children and youth asking adults how they can tell that God hears our prayers. Be honest but hopeful in answering these questions. Do you have a story of when you did not feel your prayer was answered? How do you reconcile that in your faith? Do you have a story of when God gave you what you needed? What other stories of your faith journey can you share?

All of these questions are designed to bring families together. Be prepared for answers that surprise, delight and even startle you. For instance, if your teen says they don't think you ever listen to them, take a breath and ask how they think you could be better at talking and listening to each other. If your youth is playing music with references to violence, don't just make them turn it off. Ask open-ended questions about what they like about that music, how it makes them feel and share why it concerns you, without judgement.

Instructions:

For durability, print the document on cardstock if possible. Cut the cards and place them in a jar or basket on a table. There are specific questions for adults to ask children/youth, children/youth to ask adults and questions for everyone to ask and answer.

There are seven cards in total. They could be spread over seven weeks at mealtime, used as a family road trip resource, used as table talk cards for intergenerational formation sessions, or printed and mailed to the families in your congregations. There are also blank cards for you to add a conversation starter that is meaningful to your family or community. The possibilities are endless!

Enjoy the conversations!
Episcopal Relief & Development

Building Nurturing Relationships



Adults ask Children/Youth

When do you remember feeling loved and safe? What does it feel/sound/look like to know you are safe? Where do you feel safe?



Children/Youth ask Adults

What were my favorite games to play with you when I was a baby? What about when I was a toddler? What games did you play when you were my age?



For Everyone

What are some of our favorite traditions and things we love to do together? Do we have holiday traditions? Do we love to celebrate with a certain meal? How do we prepare for special moments? Are there new traditions we'd like to create?

Just as water reflects the face, so one human heart reflects another.
(Proverbs 27:19)



Encouraging Children's Growth



Adults ask Children/Youth

What are the most important things we've taught you so far? What do you wish we would teach you? What is something you hope to be able to do when you're older?



Children/Youth ask Adults

What was my first word? Where were we when I took my first steps? How did you know I was tired when I was a baby? What do you hope I learn in the next few years?



For Everyone

What do we think every child needs to be healthy in their first 3 years? How many things can we name as a family?

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.
(Galatians 5:22-23)



Feeling Safe and Knowing We Are Loved



Adults ask Children/Youth

What do we do to keep you safe? What do you know how to do to keep yourself safe? What things should we trust you to do by yourself now?



Children/Youth ask Adults

How did your parents punish you when you were growing up? Did you think it was fair at the time? Do you think it was fair when you look back now? Do you use any of the same words or actions that your parents did when you're teaching me?



For Everyone

What are the best ways for children to learn right and wrong? How does our community help us make hard decisions? What can we do when we know we've treated someone badly?

Keep alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love.
(1 Corinthians 16:13-14)



Growing Healthy Bodies



Adults ask Children/Youth

What makes a food healthy or unhealthy? Is there a healthy food you hope we never give you again? Is there a different healthy food we can put in its place? What meals would you like to help prepare?



Children/Youth ask Adults

What was your least favorite food growing up? Did your parents make you eat it? What were your family's special meals for special occasions? Did you like to help prepare meals with your family?



For Everyone

How can we work together to eat more healthy foods? Do we have a garden where we could grow vegetables and herbs, or do we want to go shopping together? Are there recipes we'd all like to make together?

*God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of the earth and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food."
(Genesis 1:29)*



Connecting Through Music



Adults ask Children/Youth

What are your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music right now? What do you like about them; is it mostly the lyrics (words), the melody (the tune), the percussion (drums and bass) or something else?



Children/Youth ask Adults

What were your favorite songs/singers/bands/types of music when you were our age? Did your parents like them too? Do you still like them?



For Everyone

Let's take turns playing DJ for a family dance party or a long car ride where everyone gets a turn to choose the music. We all promise not to complain if someone's choice isn't our favorite because we will get another turn soon.
(We can set limits around explicit lyrics, but remember that the most important part of this game is to learn more about what kind of music each person in our family connects to, and why.)

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.
(Psalm 98:4)*



Building Strengths like Patience



Adults ask Children/Youth

Tell us about the times when we are waiting for something exciting or joyful to happen. Why is the waiting so hard? How can we help each other practice patience during these times of waiting?



Children/Youth ask Adults

Tell us about a time when you had to wait for something you really wanted when you were a kid. Is it harder to be patient as a child or as an adult? Do adults need patience? Can't they just do whatever they want whenever they want to?



For Everyone

What is a big thing our family dreams of doing together? Is it going on a big trip, or buying a house, or getting a dog someday? How can we work together as a family to plan and work toward that goal?

*Love is patient, love is kind, love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
(1 Corinthians 13:4-7)*



Let Us Pray



Adults ask Children/Youth

Do you think there's a right or wrong way to pray? Do you think God hears our prayers if they're silent (just in our head and heart)? Can a song, a drawing, or a poem be a prayer?



Children/Youth ask Adults

When do you pray? What are some of the things you pray for? How do you know if God hears your prayers?



For Everyone

When can we pray together as a family? Is there a prayer practice we'd like to try together? We could place a basket or bowl on a table, write or draw our prayers and place them in it, and then pray together every night or every week.

(There are daily devotions for families in the Book of Common Prayer, pages 137-140.)

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)



My Family—Conversation Starter



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone



My Family—Conversation Starter



Adults ask Children/Youth



Children/Youth ask Adults



For Everyone



An Intergenerational Scavenger Hunt for All Ages

These “Love Hunts” are educational experiences that encourage families and communities to learn about our work with children, share love and experiences, and give their time, talent and treasure to Episcopal Relief & Development’s Early Childhood Development work.



LOVE HUNT AT HOME

The Activity Guide with **instructions** is [here](#).

The Activity Cards for **printing** are:

[For Color Printing](#)



[For Black & White Printing](#)



THE LOVE HUNT FOR CHURCHES & COMMUNITIES

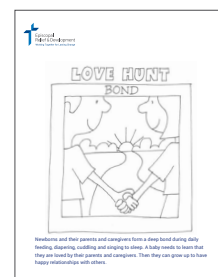
The Activity Guide with **instructions** is [here](#).

The Activity Cards for **printing** are:

[For Color Printing](#)



[For Black & White Printing](#)



Coloring Pages that accompany the themes in the activities can be printed from [this link](#).



Won't You Be My Neighbor? Outreach & Creative Community Engagement

One of the miracles of the company of children is how they remind us of God's great love for this broken world. They bring light and joy to our families and communities. We have a sacred duty to care for them, as God cares for all of us. Community leaders, including faith leaders, play a major role in raising awareness about the importance of Early Childhood Development, particularly for the most vulnerable and marginalized children.

In this section, you will find:

- » *What Can You Do Locally?*
- » *Becoming a Ministry Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development*

This prayer reminds us that children are essential to our communities and lead us into joy, wonder and peace:

Deliver all children, that we may also be delivered;

Open their hearts, that ours may also be opened;

Fill them with your spirit, that we may also be filled;

Lord, teach them to love and serve, that we may love and serve as well;

And bring them your peace, for without it, we cannot know peace ourselves.

Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

What Can You Do Locally?

There are many ways your faith community can get involved in making early childhood development a priority. Here are just a few ways to begin, based on the integrated approach of our program partnership, [Moments That Matter®](#).

Responsive Care & Early Learning

- Invite teachers, early childhood educators and Headstart professionals to offer group and individual training with parishioners and neighbors on a weekend or weeknight. Provide childcare for older siblings, and cook them all dinner.
- Offer a “Parents Night Out” for your parents. Collaborate with other faith communities or a local community center to provide similar evenings or events for the neighborhood.
- Offer childcare during a recovery support group. Includes materials for fortifying a caregiver’s relationship to infants.
- Join with other faith groups and non-profits to offer free workshops (with childcare and food) on early childhood development training for caregivers in your community.

Nutrition and Health

- Recruit and train volunteers to learn about the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program. These volunteers can then help your local food program leaders and clients better understand and enroll in the [underutilized WIC program](#) created for early childhood nutrition.
- Invite a pediatric nurse to train food program volunteers and clients on the proper distribution of donated infant formula.
- Host a weekend breakfast or other meal specifically targeting families with young children, especially those who count on schools during the week for their primary nutrition.
- Partner with a social worker to find a way to provide space and childcare for families who need appointment options that accommodate work, school, and transportation schedules.

Physical Development

- Recruit volunteers or a local scout troop to adopt a safe play area, indoors or out (or both!) for infants and toddlers. Include safety information about the use of bucket swings for the very young. Make it open and available to the neighborhood.
- When conducting diaper drives, also ask for clean play mats and floor rugs for infants to explore.
- Make sure your toy drives specify building and exploration toys and activities for those aged 0-3.

Social and Emotional Development

- Host play groups for the neighborhood, including adults to help oversee play, crafting and snacks for attendees. Recruit and train reading “tutors” to read with children at these events.
- Partner with Retirement Communities and other retired persons.

Communication Development

- Provide beautifully printed materials, flashcards and books designed for infants aged 0-3 in your common areas, waiting rooms and nurseries.
- Partner with your local library to offer space for family reading nights, book drives and sales and children's author events.
- Have a "Free Little Library" on your campus and specifically ask for board and vinyl books for children aged 0-3.

Encourage participation in these events with the families in your faith community. These priorities matter for children and their caregivers from all walks of life. Take care not to take for granted the wellness of families in our faith communities. Parenting and growing up have challenges for everyone, and we can all learn from each other. Every child matters. Children are excellent role models and peers for one another, and their wellness and good health can raise the wellness of other children. They exhibit care and compassion for each other. They are authentic, mindful and value the freedom.

Expanding Engagement

- Learn how you can join EPPN's advocacy work on [Childhood Poverty](#).
- Learn and teach about the UN's [Sustainable Development Goals 2030](#) as they pertain to Early Childhood Development

The Episcopal Asset Map

Let seekers and others in the community know what you are up to. Find faith communities with whom to share resources and ministry outreach initiatives.

The Episcopal Asset Map can help. Check your listing [here](#). If you notice something is missing or needs updated, simply click on the survey in the right-hand column and make your suggested changes. They will be forwarded to your Diocesan Map Administrator for approval, then updated!

Becoming a Ministry Partner with Episcopal Relief & Development

Maybe you are called to be a Ministry Partner. Ask yourself:

- Are you moved to connect your community to the wider world, showing how your community can be a beacon of God's love in neighborhoods near and far?
- Do you want to help ensure that women around the world live lives free from violence and are treated with dignity and respect?
- Are you interested in breaking cycles of poverty and dependence by partnering with people worldwide as they transform their own lives and communities in sustainable and life-giving ways?
- Do you want to promote healthy development for children under age six so that they can reach their full potential?
- Are you moved to support the most vulnerable communities who are disproportionately impacted by disasters?

If you answered "Yes" to these questions, then you have the makings of a Ministry Partner!

What Do Ministry Partners Do?

Ministry Partners answer the call to minister to their congregations, dioceses, provinces, seminaries and other faith communities, helping them be part of working together for lasting change.

They do this through:

- Learning about Episcopal Relief & Development's programs
- Raising awareness about Episcopal Relief & Development in their congregations, dioceses and across The Episcopal Church
- Encouraging and supporting fundraising and awareness campaigns
- Receiving support from Episcopal Relief & Development's staff and network of volunteers

Congregational, Diocesan, Provincial, and Seminary Ministry Partner roles are available.

How Do I Become a Ministry Partner?

Send an email to engagement@episcopalrelief.org. Include your name, congregation, congregation city and diocese. The Engagement team is ready to answer your questions and help you start your ministry!



Fun & Fundraising with Episcopal Relief & Development

“Fundraising is proclaiming what we believe in such a way that we offer other people an opportunity to participate with us in our vision and mission.”

— Henri Nouwen, Dutch priest and theologian

Thanks to leaders like you and faithful people across the church, awareness about early childhood development and its impact on families and communities around the world continues to grow. With your financial support, we can expand our capacity to make lasting change in how we help communities understand the beautiful potential of the first 1,000 days of life.

Episcopal Relief & Development promotes nurturing care that fosters responsive caregiving, good health and nutrition and early learning and play with children ages 0-3, while working to reduce unhealthy environmental factors like poverty, malnutrition and exposure to violence.

We’ve gathered everything you need to plan and carry out meaningful fundraising experiences: ideas for events and outreach; tips for engaging individuals, your congregation or community; and ways to share powerful stories of hope and transformation. Using these materials, you will:

LEARN

Learn about how the work and methodology of Episcopal Relief & Development helps to strengthen communities around the world.

SHARE

Share about the work of Episcopal Relief & Development with congregations and communities.

GIVE

Give a gift of your time, talent, or treasure to help nurture communities to their full potential.

Your generosity expands the reach of our collective impact and brings us one step closer to a more just and resilient world.

Let’s get started — working together for lasting change!

In this section you will find:

- » *Get Creative with Gifts for Life*
- » *How to Plan a Churchwide or Diocesan Campaign*
- » *Helpful Tips for a Successful Campaign*
- » *How to Plan an Individual or Team Fundraising Online Campaign*
- » *Fundraising with Special Fellowship & Worship Activities*
 - » *Hosting an Alternative Gift Market*
 - » *Dedicated Special Offerings*
- » *Opportunities for Local & Diocesan Grants and Individual Support*
- » *Individual Giving Opportunities*

Our Pledge to Donors

Episcopal Relief & Development is committed to using all donations appropriately and effectively to serve and support people in need worldwide. In addition to maintaining the highest standards for internal accountability, we are involved in multi-agency efforts to improve practices and reporting within the relief and development community. We are committed to accountability and making sure your gifts are used effectively.

Episcopal Relief & Development is grateful to receive support from many congregations and individuals across The Episcopal Church and other faith groups. We can only carry out our transformative programs thanks to everyone's compassionate and sustained giving.

Get Creative with *Gifts for Life*

Here are some fun ideas for fellowship, and other ways the communities you serve as a Ministry Partner can support our [Gifts for Life](#) program:

- Organize a **read-a-thon**, **dance-a-thon** or **walk-a-thon**. Collect pledges from family and friends for each mile or hour of your activity.
- Organize a weekend **car wash** and use the proceeds to purchase *Gifts for Life*.
- Arrange a **silent auction** for your church and community members. Ask members of your congregation to donate items for the auction.
- Have your adult or children's Sunday school class host and make an inexpensive **dinner** with an admission charge. Decide together what *Gifts for Life* selections to purchase with the proceeds.
- Encourage your children to **write letters** to family members, friends, classmates and club or team members to raise money to purchase a special gift. Have them mention that the gift will make a difference for children in need.
- Sponsor a church or neighborhood **garage sale**. Gather gently used books, crafts, clothes and household goods to sell, and use the money you raise to purchase items from the *Gifts for Life* catalog.
- Hold a **wine-tasting** event and use the proceeds to purchase clean water or other basic needs for a family or community.
- Instead of going out to dinner with friends, hold a **potluck** and put the money saved into a basket. Then, go through the *Gifts for Life* catalog as a group and choose items based on the amount collected.
- Hold a **game night** and ask people to donate to participate. The group can then decide together what gifts to purchase with the collected funds.
- **"Get the Warden's Goat"**: Raise enough money to buy a goat in honor of your church's warden. In the same way, you can "get the priest's goat," the treasurer's, the auditor's or whomever you choose.
- **Another fun idea**: The next time you visit with your partners in the communities you serve, spend a little time telling them about additional and varied ways they can engage our *Gifts for Life* opportunity for gift giving. Instead of holding a regular family, office or group gift exchange, ask them to consider pooling funds that would have been spent and choose [Gifts for Life](#) as a group, or give gifts to everyone based on their various interests. For example:

- * For your child's teacher: [Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners](#) or [Educate Children Orphaned by AIDS](#)
- * For new parents or grandparents: [Care for Moms & Newborns](#)
- * For an avid gardener: [Seeds, Tools & Training](#), [Fruit Trees](#) or a [Family Garden](#)
- * For a farmer: a [Cow](#), [Pig](#) or a [Flock of Chickens](#)
- * For someone in health care: [Emergency Food Relief](#) or [Disaster Relief Kit](#)
- * In honor of a baptism: [Clean Water](#)
- * For campers: [Mosquito Nets](#)
- * For a banker, accountant or church treasurer: [Micro-credit Loans for Women](#)

Adapted from a resource created by Barb Hagan, former Ministry Partner of the Episcopal Diocese of Montana. Find out how you can become a Ministry Partner by emailing us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org.



Moms with their infants gather to hear a presentation on health, covering the prevention of diseases such as malaria, diarrhea and pneumonia, from Ghanaian Health Services and ADDRO, an Episcopal Relief & Development partner in Ghana.

How to Plan a Churchwide or Diocesan Campaign

Here are some simple steps to get you started on a successful fundraising campaign for Episcopal Relief & Development.

STEP 1: Assess Interest and Capacity in a Campaign

- Begin conversations about a fundraising campaign.
- Discover if there is energy and excitement for one of Episcopal Relief & Development's priority areas: Early Childhood Development, Women & Girls, Climate Resilience and Disaster Response.
- Talk to members of your congregation, your rector and your deacons.

STEP 2: Develop and Discuss a Plan

- Goal: Will there be a total fundraising goal?
- Timing: Set the duration for one day, one month or a timeline that works for your team.
- Launch: Discuss when to launch and announce the campaign to your community.

STEP 3: Pre-Launch Preparation or Campaign Planning

- Prepare for the launch.
- Ensure the rector will share announcements about the campaign.
- Determine who will speak for the group.
- Develop a presentation on your effort.
- Utilize the resources and toolkits on our [website](#) to generate ideas for your campaign.

STEP 4: Announce the Campaign

- Present an overview of Episcopal Relief & Development
- Share your local campaign fundraising goal (if you have one), proposed timeline and ways people can get involved.
- Ask the church leadership to reinforce this message as well.
- Organize a campaign booth to provide resources to members and collect donations.

Step 5: Send Updates on Campaign

- Keep members informed on campaign progress to maintain momentum.
- Use weekly announcement times to share your progress.
- Schedule emails or website updates for your community.
- Share stories and photos of your efforts on the website or weekly e-newsletters.

Step 6: Celebrate Success!

- Announce the completion of the campaign, recognize leadership and thank everyone!
- Publish an article in your church bulletin and/or newsletter and the community newspaper.
- Inform us of your activities so we can share and celebrate your success!

Helpful Tips for a Successful Campaign

Your Role

- Re-introduce yourself to leadership where you serve as a Ministry Partner, including any updated contact information, especially if you are new to this role.
Email us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org with any questions.
- Spread the word with your local bishop, clergy and church leadership to raise awareness about the Episcopal Relief & Development fundraising campaign.
- Share stories about the benefits of the campaign for your communities.
- Be a resource for information and material; see the website for toolkits and additional resources.
- Your successes, large and small, can build awareness and encourage creative and exciting fundraisers that engage and inspire your diocese, parish and community.

Examples of Awareness-Building

- Share stories about how Episcopal Relief & Development's programs nurture early childhood development, reduce violence against women and girls, strengthen communities' climate resilience and provide support in the wake of disasters.
- Offer prayers in support of the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.
- Invite a speaker from Episcopal Relief & Development to join an adult forum or other meeting and speak about our work. Reach out to engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Examples of Fundraising

- Organize bake sales, movie nights, Super Bowl parties or other activities to support the campaign — your imagination is the limit!
- Share the donation link via email and social media to suggest donations for birthdays and other occasions "in lieu of gifts."

For More Information

- Explore our [Faith Formation and Educational Resources](#).
- Print resources, including Hope Chest, pew envelopes and brochures, can be ordered through Forward Movement. The resources are free at forwardmovement.org/episcopalrelief.org.

Be sure to share your stories with Episcopal Relief & Development. We will be highlighting the work of communities across the country. You can send updates to engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Questions? Send an email to: engagement@episcopalrelief.org

Coming Soon: Individual or Team Fundraising Online Campaign

Online fundraising is an easy and effective way to raise money. Soon you will be able to raise money as an individual or create a team and ask others to join you. Our online fundraising platform is GoFundMe Pro (formerly called Classy). GoFundMe is the leader in online fundraising and has been in the business for many years. Their platform is easy to use, secure, and will launch on our website soon! Check back for updates.

It will include a step-by-step instruction guide to create your fundraising page on GoFundMe Pro.

You will also be able to create an online fundraiser specifically for one of our priority areas.

- Early Childhood Development
- Women and Girls
- Climate Resilience
- Disaster Response

Suggestions for successful online fundraising:

Personalize your page. Make your page as personal as possible. Add pictures, customize your bio and talk about your experience with Episcopal Relief & Development. Tell your family and friends why they should help us work together for lasting change!

Target goal. Give yourself a target goal to hit that is realistic but also aggressive! There are impact donation levels for each campaign so your supporters can see the impact of their donations.

Activate your network. Use the tools available on your fundraising page to contact your network and ask for donations. Social media, email and phone calls are great ways to engage people you know. Let them know what you're doing and ask them for support. Make it clear that you need their help!

Draft potential donor list. Think of people that you can count on for their support – friends, family, neighbors and co-workers.

Sharing. Share your link on Facebook and Instagram or your other social media accounts. You can even create a video to summarize what you're doing.

Ask, then follow up. People want to support you, but everyone is busy and forgets. Follow up with your supporters and send updates to help remind them of your efforts. Personalize your requests.

Thank them. Be sure to personally thank your supporters, either by email, phone, eCards or in person. Your supporters want to know you appreciate them.

Share your success! Reach out to your family and friends when you reach campaign milestones. Halfway to your goal is a great time to share your campaign again.

Birthdays and more. Instead of asking for birthday and holiday gifts, ask for donations! Ask your family and friends to share your page with their networks. You will need help so the more people you connect with, the better.



School children gather during a morning break in Ghana.

Fundraising with Fellowship & Worship Activities

Fundraising within a faith community goes beyond simply raising money; it is an opportunity to embody our values, come together with a shared purpose and create a meaningful impact in the world.

When we give, we put our faith into action, demonstrating compassion, generosity and love for our neighbors.

Supporting Episcopal Relief & Development through a special event such as an Alternative Gift Market, Dedicated Offering or Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday is a great way to bring your faith community together and provide people with an opportunity to connect more deeply with our mission.

All ages can participate in praying, “shopping” and giving for friends near and far. The more creative your team can be with these opportunities, the more engaging the learning and fellowship can be.

Alternative Gift Market

An [Alternative Gift Market](#) is a meaningful way to give a gift that inspires transformation.

It’s a festive event where members of your community can “shop” for goats, bees and all kinds of gifts that help people in need around the world. Purchasing gifts in honor of friends, family, colleagues and community helpers becomes a welcome alternative for gift exchanges.

Consider hosting the Market on its own or combined with a church picnic, outreach fair, holiday bazaar, at the end of a Vacation Bible School celebration or even at your annual meeting.

What better way to celebrate loved ones than with gifts that reflect our faith, compassion and hope for a better world?

Here are a few creative ideas and resources to get you started:

- [How to Hold an Alternative Gift Market](#)
- [Materials and Resources for the Alternative Gift Market](#)

Dedicated Offering

Ask them to consider dedicating special community offerings to support the mission and ministry of Episcopal Relief & Development.

When disaster strikes, make certain your congregation knows about our prayers for inclusion in their worship leaflets and our bulletin [inserts](#) and encourage them to use these resources. You might also suggest they host a special outreach service or designate Pentecost Sunday as a way to celebrate the church's birthday with a gift to Episcopal Relief & Development. Other ideas include a special collection honoring a member of your community, thanking their teachers or staff or identifying parishioners who may choose to observe milestones like baptism, anniversaries or memorials with gifts to Episcopal Relief & Development.

Share with them the beautiful bulletin inserts, informational pamphlets and donation envelopes we provide, which help them share the good work of Episcopal Relief & Development and the opportunity to give. They are available for free from Forward Movement on their [website](#).

These resources are another easy way for them to educate and inspire generosity by highlighting the powerful, life-changing work their gifts make possible.

Honor and Memorial Gifts – Gifts That Save Lives and Transform Communities

Looking for ways to celebrate or remember loved ones? Our Honor and Memorial Gift Program is another wonderful and easy way for individuals to commemorate significant milestones such as birthdays, holidays and anniversaries.

At your request, Episcopal Relief & Development will send a printed card to your honoree or the family of the memorial gift recipient indicating that a gift has been made in the individual's honor or memory. Attractive eCards are offered on our website as another option when you make your donation. More information can be found on our website [here](#).

Opportunities for Local & Diocesan Grants and Individual Support

Whether you're interested in a seasonal focus, a year-long effort or a special initiative, our team is here to support you every step of the way.

Episcopal Relief & Development staff can provide planning guidance, promotional resources and fundraising tools to help you build a campaign that fits your community and inspires meaningful engagement. Email us with your questions at engagement@episcopalrelief.org.

Does Your Faith Community Offer Grants?

If your faith community has a grant program or mission-giving fund, we invite you to consider Episcopal Relief & Development as a potential recipient.

Our programs can align with your mission as we work with local partners to nurture early childhood development, reduce violence against women and girls, strengthen communities' climate resilience, and provide support in the wake of disasters.

Simply email engagement@episcopalrelief.org to let us know how to access and submit an application and supporting materials. We would be honored to be part of your community's outreach and impact.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to working with you.

Plan a Diocesan Campaign with Us

Looking to make a broader impact?

Invite your diocese to partner with Episcopal Relief & Development by contributing from their funds and grants, or by launching a diocesan-wide campaign that brings people together in faith, generosity, and service.

As an Episcopal Relief & Development Ministry Partner, you have the tools you need to share our work's success stories and invite an entire diocesan community to join us. Together, we can strengthen connections across congregations and create lasting change in communities worldwide.

Ready to get started? Reach out to us at engagement@episcopalrelief.org to learn more.

Individual Giving Opportunities

Your generosity enables us to unlock community transformation and support people affected by poverty, hunger, disaster injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. We invite you to consider our giving opportunities and find out how you can play a part in our work worldwide.

All of the links below, with information about electronically contributing, can be found on our website [here](#).

Our donation process is easy to use, quick and secure:

- **Donate Now:** [Give](#) a gift that will help transform a community.
- **Sustainers Circle:** Become a sustainer of Episcopal Relief & Development's work and learn how you can [give monthly](#) to support our programs.
- **Planned Giving:** Your planned gifts can leave a lasting impact on people and communities around the world. [Learn more.](#)
- **Other Giving Opportunities:** Episcopal Relief & Development has several giving opportunities so supporters can contribute in a way that suits their individual needs. [Find the best option for you.](#)
- **Coming Soon: Individual Online Fundraising Campaigns:** Share the opportunity to make an act of love. Start an individual fundraising campaign and inspire others to LEARN, SHARE and GIVE to support the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Donations can also be made by mail.

Please mail checks and money order donations to our updated mailing address below. You may also indicate preferences for designated *Gifts for Life* or honorariums simply by printing out the forms and including them with your gift.

Episcopal Relief & Development
PO Box 5121
Boone, IA 50950 – 0121

WE BELIEVE our life-giving, loving, liberating God gives all, gathers all and draws all towards shared wholeness with one another and the concerns of those struggling with poverty, disaster and disease.

WE BELIEVE in faith's power to guide us in honoring the dignity of every human being and in building bridges between and beyond ourselves to the world.

WE BELIEVE bridges built with local presence and assets can transform individuals, communities and systems for better.

WE BELIEVE systemic change requires collaborative, just and reconciling leadership.

WE BELIEVE we are called to right the wrongs and sins of the past, even as we strive to repent of those sins and any we continue to commit.

WE BELIEVE the present state of the world does not fulfill the dream God intends for us.

WE BELIEVE in urgent, bold and inclusive humanitarian action that reaches the most vulnerable, builds toward tomorrow and fosters and spreads hope and healing.

WE BELIEVE in Working Together for Lasting Change.

We ask God to bless this work.



Thank you for using this *Joy & Wonder – Faithfully Engaging Early Childhood Development* toolkit.

We hope that it has made a difference in how your community sees themselves as guardians of our very youngest children and their caregivers around the world.

Please visit our website for additional toolkits from Episcopal Relief & Development that will guide your community to join us in making lasting change around our other priorities:

- *Grace, Justice & Hope* — for Women & Girls Everywhere
- *Nurture & Sustain* — Action-Based Climate Resilience
- *Restore & Renew* — Responding & Rebuilding when Disaster Strikes

For over 80 years, Episcopal Relief & Development has worked with an extensive network of faith and community partners to advance lasting change in communities affected by injustice, poverty, disaster and climate change. Inspired by our faith, we reach over three million people each year by focusing on four interconnected priorities: nurturing the potential of caregivers and young children, reducing violence against women and girls, strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and facilitating humanitarian response to disasters. Together with our partners, we leverage what's working well to drive impact, learning and sustainability. Together, we create lasting change.

www.episcopalrelief.org