

Give water for life!

Bishop of St Albans' Harvest Appeal 2009



Christian Aid/Caroline Wood

Church sheet

Children's address

In advance, you'll need to have filled a large container (eg 2-litre fizzy drink bottle, 5- or 10-litre camping water carrier) with water, added a handful of potting compost if it's a bottle you don't intend using again for drinking water, with the top fastened very tightly. Place it somewhere in the church buildings that won't be too difficult to direct children to find.

Ask the children to call out all the ways they have used water today or all the ways they can think of using water (washing, flushing the toilet, washing or cooking vegetables, etc). Tell the children that the Bible talks about water a lot. Remind them that the events in it took place in hot and dry countries and a long time ago, so it was much harder and more important for people to get enough water than it is for us, here, today. Ask the children to think of stories in the Bible about water (eg Jesus turning water into wine, God working through Moses to turn the Nile to blood, Jesus walking on the water, Jesus being baptised, etc).

Explain that although we can turn on a tap whenever we want water, for many people in the world, they have to travel a long way to get it. Illustrate this by sending two children to fetch the water container you placed in the church beforehand – making sure that they are young enough to find it difficult.

When they return, ask them how they would feel if they had to travel, say, a mile (describe it as walking to a particular place close by that they would know, such as a corner shop or their school) to fetch water. And how they would feel if it were their job to fetch water for their whole family (because dad was working in the fields, because younger brothers and sisters were too little to walk all that way, etc). And how they would feel doing this every day.



Ideas for a sermon

An adult sermon could go further into the central symbolic role that water plays in many places in the Bible. Lessons could be drawn out of many stories, such as from the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3, the conversation with the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4 or Jesus washing his disciples' feet in John 13.

The point could be made about how Jesus was taking something ordinary in all these stories and transforming it into something far more. Similarly, in the stories of the projects we are supporting in Ethiopia, the real transformation is not through the water itself but what that water is being used to achieve, for example it may be growing crops or keeping fish, it may be improved health and community working. These things transform lives but would not be possible without the water.

Also see the Diocesan website: www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission.htm where you will find a downloadable PowerPoint and a sheet with Biblical themes and ideas.

Additional prayer

As well as the prayer on the appeal prayer card, you may find it helpful to use the following:

A simple tap.
Water that is reliable, clean, there.
O God, whenever I drink
or clean my teeth, or take a bath,
water the garden,
wash vegetables or clothes,
remind me to give thanks,
wholeheartedly,
for the freedom that surrounds me –
and I hardly notice it.

(Janet Morley)

Sunday school fundraising idea

A simple but effective fundraising idea would be to challenge all the children to bring in a small plastic water bottle filled with coins for the appeal. The challenge could be given to them a few weeks in advance and they could be asked to bring the money in for your special appeal service. You might wish to have your offering in the part of the service where the children were present, so that they could give their bottles at the same time as the adults were giving their gifts.

How we can help you

For more information (including longer versions of the two stories in the appeal leaflet) and resources, please contact: Valerie Geldard, Administrator, St Albans Diocesan Board for Church and Society, Holywell Lodge, 41 Holywell Hill, St Albans AL1 1HE, tel: 01727 851748, email: vgeldard@stalbans.anglican.org or see the Diocesan website: www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission.htm where you will also find a downloadable PowerPoint and a sheet with Biblical themes and ideas.

If you would like us to provide a speaker for your church, school or group, please contact Valerie Geldard (details above) – we'd be delighted to come and meet you.

Other resources

You may find it helpful to refer to the appeal poster, leaflet and prayer card during your service. There are fuller versions of the two stories from the leaflet on the diocesan website at www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission.

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Use **Gift Aid** if you can – it will add 28 per cent to your donation at no extra cost to you. Please give via your church. A percentage of our gifts will support Water Action in Ethiopia, through Christian Aid. The remainder will support other work in Ethiopia and 25 per cent of our gifts will support Christian Aid's work around the world, including their work on climate change issues. All the money that we give to Water Action will be matched 3:1 by the European Union.



Thanks to European Union matched funding, **every £1 we give to Water Action will be quadrupled.** So your gift of **£33**, for example, **would be worth £132 to the project!**

How your gifts can help

- £5 could pay for 50 fruit trees for environmental improvement
- £33 could pay for 100 metres of water pipe
- £375 could pay for a cattle trough
- £717 could pay for a water distribution point



For more information, resources and where to send your donations, contact: Valerie Geldard, tel: 01727 851748, email: vgeldard@stalbans.anglican.org or see the Diocesan website: www.stalbans.anglican.org/mission

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