

# YOUTH ACTIVITY TWO

## RISE UP ANEW : AS SAFETY AND SHELTER

### RESPONDING TO WAR

Rev. Derek Tompkins, edited by Week of Compassion

With these resources, a brief reflection is included on the theme for this year's Special Offering - **RISE UP ANEW** - and then each youth activity includes:

**BACKGROUND** - stories from Week of Compassion, with links to the site for more information. Useful in the youth leader's own understanding and preparation, or to share with the youth to lead into the related activity and discussion.

**DISCUSSION** - Expand or select from the questions that best suit your youth.

**ACTIVITY** - Simple prep with minimal supplies needed.

These activities are suitable for both middle- and high-school youth and can be adapted, in background and discussion, to best fit the age and make-up of your youth group(s). Where possible, notes about sensitive or complex conversations are included.



## LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23

*Yet it is because I remember all this that I have hope.*

*YHWH's favor is not exhausted, nor has God's compassion failed.*

*They **RISE UP ANEW** each morning, so great is God's faithfulness. (The Inclusive Bible)*

God's mercies are new every morning. To many of us, a simple reminder, perhaps even a glimmer of breath, new life, and hope.

And yet we also know that for many people in the world, every morning still means struggle. Every morning still means worry. Every morning still means disease, and fear, and lament that will not end.

We are exhausted. But God never is.

We are fatigued. But God's compassion never fails.

We know everything that has led us here. And because of that we hope. And we rise up anew each morning. We do. Because God does.

Through Week of Compassion, Disciples recommit to the work of hope - borne out of lament, and suffering, and uncertainty, it is hope just the same. God's compassion has not failed. Week of Compassion is committed to that great faithfulness, too.

## BACKGROUND

When it comes to disasters that happen in other parts of the world, Week of Compassion's primary approach is to support local partners in the affected area. They are already on the ground, working within local infrastructure and relationships; and they are able to respond immediately to the most urgent needs following a disaster. Week of Compassion continues to support the work of partners through various phases of ongoing recovery.<sup>2</sup>

The war in Ukraine has displaced so many people. [Read an incredible story of three teenagers who fled Ukraine, by going through Russia, in the [2023 Special Offering Resource Guide](#).] Week of Compassion has helped partners on the ground in Europe to support those fleeing the war in their country. In Budapest, Hungary, a sports stadium has been converted into a transit center for refugees from Ukraine. Daniel Feteke, from Hungarian Interchurch Aid describes the work there:

*We are in one of the transit zones here in Budapest. There are a lot of refugees coming each day here: more than 1000, 2000 people crossing this part. They are staying six hours here in this place and there are a lot of supporting points. HIA is giving some food, hygiene kits, water to those who are coming here. There are places to have rest on the other side. They can buy tickets to railway if they want to cross to other countries and there are possibilities to have temporary shelter, and we can make accommodation here in Budapest as well.*

<sup>2</sup> Learn more about these partnerships at Week of Compassion's [international disaster response page](#).

Maria from Kyiv was traveling to Egypt when the war broke out. She returned for her father, son and their dog. They are in transit in Budapest while they wait to travel to Zurich where they will stay with family. She tells about their needs:

*We come to Hungary, here. We go to volunteers, and now we know what is 'care' about, because we {get} food, documents made for my son (because his passport out of date very fast) no problem, and then we go to the school to sleep. And you know we are very thankful for the help,*

*because when you go out from your where you have work, friends, a school, you have home, with all the things you work over all of your live, you're homeless with just a bag it's like you know you don't understand what is going on and you only think that you should be in safety with the children to save life it's the one thing and you make step by step what you should do. It's why the help of other people is very very very important.*<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Find video about the sports arena that became a transit station, and meet Maria, at Week of Compassion's 'Stories' page ([Maria's Story](#)).

## DISCUSSION ONE

Show the video(s) of [Maria's story](#) or tell the story yourself (if technology isn't an option, or if you think your group will respond better to your telling).

- How does Maria's story impact you?
- If you had to leave your home and never go back because of a hurricane, tornado, war, flood, earthquake or other disaster, and could only take one thing, what would that be? What if you couldn't even take that? Over half of the families in Maria's shelter had their pets with them.
- What would help feel like?
- What does it feel like to know that your church is partnering all over the world, including in North America, to walk with and support Maria and those like her?

## ACTIVITY

### SUPPLIES:

- *Something for each person to build with (deck of cards, Lego, tinker toys, blocks, etc.)*
- *Enough space for everyone to be seated around tables (an open-square, like a conference room, might work best)*

*This might be a familiar activity; attaching it to a Week of Compassion disaster-response lesson might be a new twist.*

Get the youth around the supplies in a circle or square. Tell them to build the best house they can out of the material they have. Give them plenty of time to add personal flourish to their design.

*Process Note: Consider that there may be youth in your group who have been displaced, or had family members displaced, by natural disaster, house fire, eviction, foster care, emergency, migration/deportation, etc. Decide how you want to proceed with the next steps of this activity in ways that keep their experiences in mind. (They may be informative additions to the discussion later.)*

Once they are done, tell them to look around at the town they have built. Have them leave the room or area.

Shake the table and knock down all the homes.

Have the youth return to their spots. Explain that a natural disaster struck the town. *[You could share an actual account from Week of Compassion's 'Stories' page, and either have someone shake the table or do it yourself, while you're telling the actual story.]*

Have everyone move one spot to the right. Ask them to rebuild the house that used to be at that spot, to the best of their ability. They should work independently and not offer any help to the person rebuilding theirs.

After allowing an amount of time for some frustration to build, have them help each other finish the rebuilding of each other's houses.

## DISCUSSION TWO

- What was it like to see your work destroyed?
- What if all the building supplies were gone and you had to work just to get the supplies back?
- How did it feel when someone else was rebuilding your house? How did it feel to not have any instruction for what you were rebuilding?
- How did it feel to work together? *[It's entirely possible not all these answers will be positive!]*
- *Use explanations from the Week of Compassion [domestic disaster response page](#) and brochure to guide further discussion:*
  - Having watched others work on your house without you, and then having the chance to work together, why do you think it matters that Week of Compassion prioritizes working with local communities when offering disaster response? *[so there's as much input as possible from local residents and survivors]*
  - How does Week of Compassion help our church walk with people in their time of need?