

# YOUTH ACTIVITY THREE

## RISE UP ANEW : AS OPPORTUNITY

### SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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

*In addition to disaster response, Week of Compassion is active in many sustainable development projects all over the world. These projects address the root causes of poverty that often make progress difficult in impoverished areas. They also allow us to address the new challenges presented by climate change in parts of the world that already struggle with meeting basic needs.*

Our approach is to work closely with local leaders in each community where we have a presence, so that change is rooted in relationship and empowerment. We adhere to the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. Through our partner organizations, we help people to provide for themselves, their families and their neighbors-- often using the resources already available to them. Our programs focus primarily on education, agriculture, and community building through a range of vocational opportunities.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Week of Compassion, [sustainable development page](#)



## DISCUSSION

Show the video to see a project of the Mennonite Social Action Committee, Week of Compassion partners through ACT Alliance, in Honduras.

- If you didn't have running water in your home how would that change your life?
- Who knows how to milk a cow? Make cheese? Dig a well? Make fertilizer? Grow beans properly? Raise chickens?
- If we were dependent on what we can grow or raise, how long would we last? What if it didn't rain for a year or two? What if our water was polluted?
- Just like we would need it, the people who are dependent on what they can raise or grow on their land for food and income need education in how to do it right.
- What would it feel like to know you could take care of your needs because somebody helped you get started?
- What else can they do now that they have this ability?
- Why does partnering with people and groups who are already working in the area that needs help work best?
- How is it good stewardship of the money we give?

## ACTIVITY

Take some time as a group to explore the Week of Compassion website, and especially the [2023 Special Offering](#) resources.

- Watch the [theme video](#).
- Read the Mission Moments. (You might invite youth to read them for the group.)
- Visit the [Stories](#) page and scroll through recent updates on disaster response, refugee resettlement, and long-term recovery.
- Talk about which stories inspire them, and what questions they raise.
- Knowing that there are so many needs, plan and do a Week of Compassion fundraiser. It could be a 5K or Bike-A-Thon. It could be a craft sale or bake sale or garage sale. It could be a loose-change-found-in-the-washer-and-dryer-for-a-year fundraiser. It will take work to decide and to publicize.
- Send the money to Week of Compassion (or donate it [online](#)). Include a note saying which stories or programs inspired your group's gift. Share the story of that program around your larger community. See what God can do when we **RISE UP ANEW**, despite our weariness and despair, and do something to make a difference.



photo: Alpha Kapola/ACT Alliance