



2016 Planning & Resource Guide

**"Where you go I will go; and
where you stay I will stay."** RUTH 1:16

Week of Compassion Special Offering

FEBRUARY 21-28





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A Message From Your Director

Hello Friends,

I bring you greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. We have chosen the theme “Where you go I will go; and where you stay I will stay” for this year’s Week of Compassion special offering. During the weeks leading up to the offering, we invite you to reflect on the words of Ruth (Ruth 1: 16-17) and the ways that we, as Church, can live into a spiritual practice of solidarity. Together, we are able to work with communities and positively impact lives all over the world; to accompany people during the time of their greatest need; and to share good news with our sisters and brothers when hope is needed most.

Through our many partners, your Week of Compassion fulfills its mission of ready and compassionate response when confronted with widespread human distress caused by natural disasters or political crises. In many different areas of development and disaster relief – from helping small farmers gain equal access to a fair market, to ensuring women can support their families by making handmade products in countries like Iraq and Haiti, to assisting in the development of sustainable, resilient communities that build the resources they need to support themselves – Week of Compassion strives to stand in solidarity and foster abundant life for all through our partnerships.



We have seen this commitment to active solidarity from the very beginning of Week of Compassion’s history through today: when human rights violations, civil turmoil and conflict, or natural and human-made disasters devastate lives and call on the world – call on the Church – to turn our attention, to form partnerships, to work together to offer relief and support to communities in need. In critical times, our Church has been there to help deal with the crises of the times. New life, hope, strength, and community have blossomed in many places and over many decades because we have always put our compassion in action.

This is who we are as Church: we respond when our brothers and sisters across the world ask us to accompany them on their journeys; we show up with assistance when the world screams for help.

At this moment, the conflict in Syria and the surrounding countries is calling on the Church to respond. Since the war broke out five years ago, there are more people who are displaced or in refugee camps than there were during the entirety of World War II. Displaced persons are calling on the international community to respond. The situation is too dire and immediate to ignore. The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the United States and Canada, through Week of Compassion, has and will continue to offer solidarity and support to those living through one of the greatest humanitarian crises in current memory.

During this time of the Week of Compassion special offering, we can recommit ourselves to follow in the example of Ruth. We can say to the refugee, the displaced person, the one seeking asylum that we will go where they go and walk in solidarity beside them throughout their journey. We can give of ourselves through time, talent, prayer, and tangible resources. This is another opportunity for us to be the body of Christ, at work in the world, sharing the Good News of reconciliation and justice and wholeness.

It is my great joy and honor to serve on behalf of your Week of Compassion.

Sincerely,

Rev. Vy T. Nguyen, Executive Director

Organizing the Offering Process

You have been asked to coordinate this year's Week of Compassion offering. How might you best prepare your congregation and community for the offering?

Scan through this planning and resource guide. Other helpful resources can be found at www.weekofcompassion.org.

The **suggested offering date is February 21-28, 2016**. If you do not already have a standing order with WoC or if you need additional offering materials (bulletin inserts, envelopes, coin boxes, etc.), please go to our website to fill out the form, or contact info@weekofcompassion.org or call **317.713.2442**. Once you've received the offering materials, give them to the appropriate person(s) (e.g., the bulletin preparer) for distribution at the correct times.

Involve Others

Share the worship resources with your pastor/worship leaders.

Ask that the theme of the worship service on the offering date be connected to the offering. Worship resources in this guide and on the website can help.

Set dates for the Minutes for Mission (two weeks before the offering date) and the dramatic interpretation (one week before).

Share the children and youth activities with Christian Education and youth group leaders. Ask that they be used during the several weeks before the offering date.

Recruit people to do the following and share with them the written resources they will need to:

Offer the Minutes for Mission on several Sundays prior to the offering date.

Prepare and present the dramatic interpretation.

Prepare and make the offering invitation on the offering date itself.

Set a challenging goal for the offering with the leadership team. Consider increasing giving by a certain percentage over last year, or increasing the number of giving units.

Perfect Timing

The month before the offering date, begin promoting the offering.

Put the offering date on the church calendar.

Send the congregational letter and sharing calendar to each household. Will you use the newsletter? A separate mailing? An e-mail?

Display the offering poster in a prominent place. Consider changing its location each week to keep the message fresh and to reach more people.

Do the traditional things your congregation associates with the offering—perhaps a potluck presentation on WoC, prayer time in the Sunday School classes, the children or youth reporting out about the offering-related activities they have done.

Two weeks before the offering date:

Share the Minutes for Mission during the worship service.

Make sure the offering date is listed among the "upcoming events" in the bulletin.

One week before the offering date:

Include the dramatic interpretation in the worship service.

Include in the bulletin any written material people should consider as they make decisions about their giving.

Place offering envelopes in the pews.

On the offering date:

Make sure extra offering envelopes are available.

Help the worship leaders in whatever ways they need to make the offering theme an integral and prominent part of the worship service.

Talk before the offering collection about how the offering helps us spread God's love in North America and the wider world. Specifically invite the congregation to give to WoC. Tell of your intention to increase your gift this year, and encourage others to do so, too. Remind people that needs continue throughout the year.

One and two weeks after the offering date:

Report the amount received to date. Did you meet your congregational goal?

Invite those who have not yet given to contribute.

At the end of the offering collection period:

Report to the congregation the total amount contributed. Celebrate and praise God for the wonderful work the offering will do!

Thank the congregation verbally and in writing for giving to WoC.

Encourage your members to sign up for WoC Updates at www.weekofcompassion.org, like Week of Compassion on Facebook, and follow Week of Compassion on Twitter.

Your standing order, if on file with Week of Compassion, **will be mailed after December 25**. Please check your order to make sure you have the materials or if you have questions about your order, please contact:

Week of Compassion
PO Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206
Phone: 317.713.2442
Email: info@weekofcompassion.org

Your standing order should include:

- 2016 theme posters
- 2016 bulletin inserts
- WoC offering envelopes
- Coin boxes

Additional Resources

2016 Planning and Resource Guide

Please share this guide with outreach leaders and others responsible for your congregation's Week of Compassion special offering. Additional copies are available upon request or can be downloaded from the WoC website www.weekofcompassion.org (Photocopy-friendly).

Week of Compassion Map/Poster

A beautiful 36"x48" interactive map/poster to help keep members informed and updated about Disciples work and witness in the world through WoC (while supply lasts).

Videos

Beautiful videos can be found on our website to help talk about the ministry of Week of Compassion. They are perfect for Minute for Mission moments during worship, the Offertory, Sunday School, or at a fellowship meal. The videos can be viewed and downloaded at: www.weekofcompassion.org/videos/.

Getting ready to Come Back

This ecumenical guide from Bread for the World helps Christians returning from mission trips become effective advocates to end hunger and poverty. Tools throughout the resource help teams prepare for their trip, reflect on their experiences, and take action once back home: all with the goal of making a long-term impact by helping address the causes of hunger and poverty. The guide includes Bible studies, discussion topics, and prayers for each part of the journey. A limited number of copies are available from the WoC office at no cost.

Making Poverty History

Use skits, simulations and worship resources around the issues of poverty and hunger. Useful for CROP Walk teams, youth groups, women's groups, etc. Call Church World Service at 800.297.1516 to order or visit www.churchworldservice.org/hungerbooklet/.

Disciples Coffee Project

The Disciples of Christ Coffee Project, a partnership between Week of Compassion, Disciples Home Missions and Equal Exchange, is a way for your congregation to join hands with independent farmer communities across the world. You can put your faith into action by using fairly traded coffee, tea, chocolate and snacks in your congregation. Through the project, farmers receive fair prices for their crops, affordable credit, and long-term trade relationships with a trading partner they can trust, Equal Exchange. In addition, for every pound of fairly traded products Disciples order through the Project, Equal Exchange makes a donation to the Disciples Hunger Relief and Food Security fund. Visit www.equalexchange.coop/doc/ for more information.



Prosperity Candle

Prosperity Candle partners with Week of Compassion to celebrate and empower women through entrepreneurship. Prosperity Candle provides women the opportunity to earn more than a living wage so that they can break free from the cycle of poverty. Each candle comes with the story of the women who made it. Not only can you invest in the lives of these women and their futures by purchasing a candle, but with every Week of Compassion-related purchase made, 10% is donated in to WoC's Women's Empowerment Fund. Visit www.prosperitycandle.com

Week of Compassion Website

Find the Planning and Resource Guide, as well as reports, resources, stories and photos, links to partner sites, and much more online at our website: www.weekofcompassion.org

Congregational Letter

Dear Friends,

It is time again for the Week of Compassion special offering, February 21-28, 2016. By the grace of God, we are given the opportunity to share our gifts and resources with our brothers and sisters in need around the world. All of us have the power to give back to God from that which God has given us, and in doing so, make the world a more just world for all of God's children. Through our gifts, we participate in the many ministries of Week of Compassion and its partners who serve the hungry, the poor, the distressed, the refugee.

The Hebrew Bible models this offering in the story of Ruth and Naomi, portrayed in the book of Ruth. When faced with forced relocation, due to famine and political strife, Ruth says to Naomi, "Where you go, I will go." Solidarity stands at the heart of their story. Solidarity stands at the heart of the ministries of Week of Compassion. Solidarity stands at the heart of this offering.

Like Ruth and Naomi, refugees today are confronted with dire situations in their homes, and are forced by the necessity of survival to leave behind their communities in order to seek safety and security. Currently, the United Nations estimates over 60 million of our brothers and sisters across the world are refugees or displaced persons. The number is higher than it has been since World War II, and it will only climb further as violence continues in the Middle East and parts of Africa.

Through Week of Compassion and its partners, we are able to embrace refugees around the world as our own. We are able to say "where you go, we will go." This offering places us side-by-side with those in need. It offers us the opportunity to be Ruth for the Naomi's of the world. By supporting Week of Compassion, we answer God's call for us to bring wholeness to a fragmented world.

The Week of Compassion offering reaches across the globe. Sometimes it provides solidarity to those who have experienced loss due to disasters in our own community and congregation, and at other times it positively impacts the lives of our sisters and brothers on the other side of the world. Through our gifts, we can stand with those in need. As the body of Christ in the world, we can ensure that all of God's children have what they need. Together, and through Week of Compassion, we can accompany the refugee and stand in solidarity with the distressed, bringing about a world that God intended.

Thank you for your leadership in promoting this special offering and in putting our Compassion in Action!

Sincerely,

Pastor/Offering Coordinator



Worship Resources: Where you go I will go; and where you stay I will stay

Key



= Leader



= People



= Officiant

Liturgy

Call to Worship/Reading from the Psalter (based on Psalm 146)



Praise the Lord!



Praise the Lord, O my soul!



I will praise the Lord as long as I live,



I will sing praises to my God all my life long.



Do not put your trust in princes,



In mortals, in whom there is no help.



Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,



Whose hope is in the Lord their God,



Who execute justice for the oppressed,



Who give food to the hungry.



Praise the Lord!



Praise the Lord, O my soul!

Opening/Invocational Prayer

God of Naomi and Ruth, in our journeys through life, we have been both broken and blessed. In solidarity, you accompany us. You receive us as we are, in our own weakness and vulnerability. For your immanent presence in our journeys, we are ever grateful. With thankful hearts we gather as your people to praise you for redeeming us. And by your Word and through your Spirit, we ask that you transform us into redeeming and reconciling people in the world. Guide us as we stand in solidarity with the 60 million refugees and displaced persons across the world. As you have walked with us, help us walk with those in need.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

L or **P** (or both in unison): God our Redeemer, you are “our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble*.” You accompany us in moments of blessedness and in periods of brokenness. Yet at times we fail to recognize your presence and choose instead to live in self-centered reliance as though we are in isolation. In turn, we isolate the most vulnerable; we act as though crises beyond our community do not deserve our concern. Unlike Ruth and Naomi, we live up to Orpah’s** namesake and turn the “back of our necks” to others. We give into the fear of uncertainty instead of the grace of solidarity. We confess that by expulsion or neglect, we push away those who seek refuge in our midst, ignoring that you are the Redeemer who offers refuge to all. Free us now from our suffocating isolation, that we may breathe anew your liberating Spirit, the source of all compassion, the strength of all justice. We pray in the name of Christ Jesus and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

* *Psalm 46:1*

** *Orpah’s name means “back of the neck.” Orpah is the daughter-in-law who goes back to Moab.*

Assurance of Pardon & Passing of the Peace

L Scripture bears witness to a God of justice who “sets the prisoners free” and “lifts up those who are bowed down” (Psalm 146:7-8), a God of grace who has “reconciled us to himself through Christ*.” Therefore be assured, sisters and brothers, that our God liberates, Christ reconciles, and the Spirit lifts us up!

P Praise be to God! Amen!

L As a redeemed and renewed people, let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

* *2 Corinthians 5:18*

Scripture Readings

Old Testament—Ruth 1:6-18

Epistle—2 Corinthians 5:16-21

Reading of the Gospel: Gospel—John 15:1-17 (or 12-17) or Matthew 5:38-48

Sermon (based on Ruth 1)

See Sermon Starter on page 12

Invitation to Offering

In Ruth we read of the encounter between two refugees, Naomi and Ruth. Naomi is a refugee in Moab due to famine in Judah, and Ruth is a refugee due to patriarchal systems that rendered single women utterly vulnerable. Both Naomi and Ruth took refuge in Naomi’s land, and they survived such tumultuous transitions because each one gave the greatest gift: their very selves.

By participating in the Week of Compassion offering, we follow God’s command to love. Through this ministry we stand in solidarity with the most vulnerable. Through our giving, we as a Church accompany refugees as they seek to rebuild their lives.

Yet this time of offering—of giving a portion of our financial resources—is only the beginning of our call to give. Jesus declared, “No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends*.” In addition to your financial gift, consider other ways you can walk alongside refugees, and how you can remain open to ways others might minister to you. Let us give joyously and generously at this time. * *John 15:13*

Prayer for the Offering

L For your divine providence, we thank you, ever-generous Creator. In responsive humility, we have rendered unto you these gifts of our material possessions. We entrust them to you so that through them, your Church may live out its call of solidarity and accompaniment. May the witness and work made possible by our tithes and offerings comfort and empower those seeking refuge, that all refugees and displaced persons may be able to sing with peace and joy “the Lord’s song in a foreign land” (Psalm 137:4).

En el nombre de Jesucristo, oramos. Amen!

The Lord’s Supper

Preface:

L The Lord be with you.

P And also with you.

L Lift up your hearts.

P We lift them up to the Lord.

L Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P It is right to give God our thanks and praise.

L In a spirit of thanksgiving, let us sing as we ready our hearts to partake of the Bread of Life and Cup of Salvation.

Hymn/Communion Hymn

See suggested hymns on page 12

Invitation to Communion

L In the time of Ruth, the Holiness Code of the Law required that farmers not harvest the corners of their fields or recover produce that was dropped during harvest.* That food was left to be collected by the marginalized, the poor, the stranger, the refugee—people like Ruth and Naomi. This Law was for the sake of the less fortunate so that no one—no one!—would be hungry in the land.

Christ declared, “I am the true vine” (John 10:10). As the vine, Christ provides life and livelihood to us all, and there is plenty for all to draw on him. At his Table we find a gleaning field where all are fed and no one is turned away. There is plenty for all, including all who have been forced to leave their homes and seek refuge across this world.

**For example, see Leviticus 19:9, 23:22, and Deuteronomy 24:19.*

We are nourished at this Table of Abundance so that in turn we may live abundantly a life of neighborly love—a life lived for the Other. In the Incarnation, God goes where we go and stays where we stay, assuring us as God’s people. In response, we stand in solidarity with refugees and those deemed “outsiders,” assuring them with words and acts, that in Christ they always have refuge.

Words of Institution

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Prayer for the Elements

Loving God, thank you for setting this table for us, a gleaned field of nourishing abundance. We partake humbly and joyously of this Holy Feast. Through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son we have been reconciled to you. Help us now to go forth and be reconciling people in the world. Open our eyes that we may catch glimpses of Christ. May your Holy Spirit descend upon these gifts of bread and wine, blessing them and making them holy. May we, consecrated by your Spirit, be the Body of Christ, accompanying our world as you transform it into a New Heaven and New Earth. Through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sharing of the Meal

Come, feast on Christ. Feast on his Body and Blood. Come glean from his table of plenitude where all are nourished from his abundant life, and where we are empowered to share lively abundance with the world.

Benediction/Charge

Through song, prayer, word, and fellowship, we have been challenged to stand in solidarity with the stranger, the foreigner, the refugee—to accompany the most vulnerable as an expression of love for God. We have been nourished by the Word, both proclaimed and served at the Table. Therefore, my sisters and brothers,

Go into the world as God's agents of reconciliation.

Have the courage of Christ to lay down your life for others.

Hold on to what is good and just.

Return to no one evil for evil, but instead help the suffering

Honor all people.

Love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen! Amen! Amen!

Suggested Hymns

Assembled by Amanda Garcia

- Lead Me, Guide Me
- I Want Jesus to Walk with Me
- Guide My Feet
- Help Us To Help Each Other
- In Christ There Is No East and West
- Will You Let Me Be Your Servant
- Healer Of Our Every Ill
- For The Beauty Of The Earth
- God of Justice - Tim Hughes
- Until All Are Fed - Bryan McFarland
- All Who Are Thirsty - Brenton Brown
- I Will Follow - Chris Tomlin
- We Are One Body - Dana Scallon
- There Are Many Gifts - Patricia Shelly

Sermon Starter

By José Francisco Morales Torres

Primary Scripture

Ruth 1:1-22

Other Scriptures

Psalter—Psalm 146

Epistle—2 Corinthians 5:16-2

Gospel—John 15:1-17 (or 12-17); Or, Matthew 5:38-48

Where you go, I will go...

Ruth 1:1-22 (To be read in liturgy: vv 6-18)

Our justice work for the year focuses on ministry with and for refugees by our ecumenical partners. And there is no better biblical story than that of Ruth and Naomi, as beautifully portrayed in the Book of Ruth. Brief yet profound, we encounter the resilience of two women, ravaged by the natural disaster of famine and the human-made disaster of patriarchy. These ecological and socio-political events rendered Naomi and Ruth, who in turn become husband-less, the most vulnerable in societies structured on male privilege. Like refugees today, Ruth and Naomi did not have the privilege of choosing to stay in their homes. Forces beyond their control left them no other choice but involuntary relocation. There are currently 60 million individuals who are living as refugees or displaced persons in every region across the globe. The numbers will only continue to grow as violence and persecution reigns in parts of the Middle East, Northern Africa, and Latin America. In preaching the text in light of the refugee experience, this connection should be made, maybe with contemporary stories as a way of elucidating the dynamics at work in the Ruth narrative. (Stories can be found through Disciples Home Mission's Refugee & Immigration Ministries at <https://www.discipleshomemissions.org/dhm/dhm-ministries/refugee-immigration-ministries/>)

The book of Ruth can be read as a human story and a God story, the former “incarnating” the latter. As a human story, we are moved toward the *spirituality of solidarity*, which is richly encapsulated in verses 16 and 17—

“But Ruth said,
 ‘Do not press me to leave you
 or to turn back from following you!
 Where you go, I will go;
 where you stay, I will stay;
 your people shall be my people,
 and your God my God.
 Where you die, I will die—
 there will I be buried.
 May the Lord do thus and so to me,
 and more as well,
 if even death parts me from you!’”

In the divine realm, it is about God’s redemption, which is mirrored or reciprocated in the human act of solidarity. *Redemption means that God stands in solidarity with us.* In traditional exegesis of Ruth, the human archetype for God—and in the Christian imagination, Christ—has been given to Boaz, the “kinsman redeemer” who “redeems” Ruth, securing a life for her. Yet, *I contend that the divine act of redemption is also embodied in the commitment Ruth and Naomi make to each other to stay together.* Hence with this exegetical move, salvation takes on communal dimensions. This is much-needed good news in a globalizing world that sinfully seeks to distinguish people between “them” and “us.”

Applying the words of the theologian Roberto Goizueta to Ruth, this is “a theology of *acompañamiento* [accompaniment].” The God that is hidden in the Ruth story is revealed in the act of accompanying the most vulnerable in society. *God is revealed to us in our accompanying the refugee.* Consequently, we, like the refugee, come face-to-face with our own need and vulnerability: we need to see the refugee in order to see God in our midst. Therefore, in a deeper, truer sense, we have received even more. We reignite our own faith and reframe our own humanity in our encounter with the faith and humanity of the other. This sermon can be an opportunity for Christians to recognize the transforming power of solidarity, not just for “them” but for “us.” After all, through the eyes of *acompañamiento*, there is only “us!”

Homiletically speaking, the passage can be approached in many ways. Here are three ways (not mutually exclusive) of entering the story of Ruth and proclaiming its implications for the Church’s ministry with and for refugees:

As mentioned above, the Ruth/Naomi covenant personifies the Church’s call to seek justice for refugees. Reading Ruth and Naomi’s journey through our globalizing world (and the refugee phenomenon it engenders), and reading our globalizing world through Ruth and Naomi’s journey, generates, in dramatic fashion, a summons to the Church to stand with refugees as a *mutual act of vulnerability and hope*. This sermon will highlight salvation as a communal act and *acompañamiento* (or solidarity) as its correlating spiritual discipline. *Solidarity is a spiritual discipline because, by engaging in it, we encounter God.*

Each stanza or line in verses 16 and 17 can serve as a structuring device with which to explore the dimensions of solidarity. For example, “Where you go, I will go” asserts that incarnational presence is foundational for solidarity; and “your people shall be my people” calls for identifying with “the other.” The spiritual depth of solidarity can be highlighted by the stanza “your God my God.” In a world where the power of words is depleting, this in-depth “word study,” centered in verses 16 and 17, can help recover, for the congregation, the substance of the word “solidarity.”

Also mentioned above, there are two planes, one explicit and the other implicit, on which the Ruth narrative operates: the human and the divine. The act of solidarity is the human corollary of the divine act of redemption. A good homiletical approach to the two planes will highlight the relationship between our theology and our ethics. In other words, our vision of God should inform our way of being in the world. In Ruth, the portrait of God is painted by two women who choose solidarity. God is, therefore, one who chooses to stand in solidarity with us, whether we are from Judah or Moab (or from North America or the Middle East, etc.). There are various theological traditions from which to draw: womanist (the mutuality and reciprocity of liberation), liberation (God accompanying those who suffer), or Eastern Orthodox (incarnation as God taking on flesh to be in “solidarity” with all flesh), to name a few.

Children's Sermon

Welcome, everyone! Thanks for coming.

Who knows what day today is? (Answer: Sunday) And on Sundays, we go to church in the mornings. What about the day after Sunday? What do we usually do on Monday mornings? (Let the children answer, guide them toward going to school on Monday mornings). That's right. We go to school on Monday mornings.

Does everybody like school here? (There will be a variety of answers, probably). Yes, sometimes school can be really fun and sometimes it can be really boring/hard/not fun at all. But why do we go to school? Why is it important for kids and sometimes adults to go to school? (Allow time for a variety of answers)

Do you know that there are some kids around the world that are not able to go to school at all? Sometimes it is because their parents need them to have a job and help feed their families, or sometimes it is because they have had to leave the places that they live because of natural disasters or wars make it unsafe for them to stay in their homes. When someone has to leave their home for reasons that they don't control, that person is called a refugee or a displaced person. And the United Nations estimates that there are over 30 million children who are refugees or displaced across the world. Kids like Karim, who live in a refugee settlement in Northern Syria. Karim is 11 years old and has not been to school in 2 years. Instead, he has a job chopping wood to help make money and feed his family.

Karim is kind of like Ruth, in today's Bible story. Both Ruth and Karim were forced to leave their homes and work to help support their family. BUT there are ways for us, here in our own hometown to help kids like Ruth or like Karim.

Today is a special day in church, because we are collecting money for Week of Compassion during the offering. Week of Compassion is a way that our church and other churches in North America can help families all over the world. And right now, there are so many people in the world who need our help.

Jesus asks us to love one another, and to help everyone we meet. And, even sometimes, we can help boys and girls who are refugees like Ruth or Karim, even if we have never met them. One way we can help anyone who is hungry or in trouble, regardless of if we have met them before or not, is to give money through our church. It's a very special way that we can love our brothers and sisters in Christ all around the world. The money we collect today will help families who don't have a home, or help families who are hungry, or help families that are trying to find safety. By giving to the Week of Compassion offering, it is a way that we can stay where they stay and go where they go... so they don't have to be alone. Isn't that great?

Let's say a prayer. Dear Jesus. Thank you for loving us, and all the boys and girls and adults all over the world. Thank you giving us food to eat. Thank you for giving us homes to be safe in. We pray that you would give food and safety to everyone who is in need, and that you would let us help you do that, so everyone will know how much you love us all. Amen.

Dramatic Scripture Reading

By Amanda Garcia

This is a dramatic reading intended for four participants. Readers Two and Four may be best read by females, and readers One and Three could be either male or female. It is suggested that –if possible–each reader has their own printed copy of the text and reads from their own individual stands with individual microphones (it is typically less dynamic and effective to have all readers sharing a podium, a mic, and one copy of the text). It is also suggested that readers practice the reading together like they would a skit, for the sake of timing and rhythm.

- 1 In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land.
- 2 Famine. Hunger. Desolation.
- 1 And a man from Judah went to live in Moab, he and his wife and two sons.
- 2 A stranger in a strange land, trying to do what's best for his family.
- 1 The man's name was Elimelech, and his wife's name was Naomi.
- 3 Naomi, meaning, "pleasantness."
- 1 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.

- 3 Naomi. "Pleasantness." A widow.
- 2 Naomi, a stranger in a strange land, now without her partner, still trying to do what's best for her family.
- 1 Naomi's sons married Moabite wives. The name of one was Orpah.
- 3 Orpah, meaning, "neck," or even, "to turn the neck."
- 1 And the other was named Ruth.
- 3 Ruth, meaning, "companion; friend."
- 1 When they had lived in Moab ten years, both of Naomi's sons also died, so she was left without her two sons and her husband.
- 2 A stranger in a strange land, a woman, powerless, hungry, and alone, desperate to do what's best for her family.
- 1 So she started to return to Judah with her daughters-in-law, because she heard that the Lord had given food to his people in Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,
- 4 "Go back, each of you to your mother's house. May God deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with your dead husbands and with me. God grant you security, each of you in the houses of new husbands."
- 1 Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud, and they said to her,
- 2 and 3: "No, we will return with you to your people."
- 1 But Naomi said,
- 4 "Turn back, my daughters. Why will you go with me? Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband and bear more sons to grow up for you to marry. No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the Lord has turned against me."
- 1 Then they wept aloud again, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and left.
- 3 Orpah turned her neck and left.
- 1 But Ruth clung to her. So Naomi said,
- 4 "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."
- 1 But Ruth said,
- 2 "Do not press me to leave you, or to turn back from following you. Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people shall be my people, and your God my God."
- 1 When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more and the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.
- 2 They walked together,
- 3 bearing each other's burdens
- 4 spurring each other on
- 2 lifting each other up.
- ALL Together
- 2 They walked the miles,
- 3 Facing the unknown
- 4 Full of love for the other.

1 When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred, they said

2, 3, and 4: "Is this Naomi?"

1 She said to them,

4 "Call me no longer Naomi. Call me Mara."

3 Mara, meaning, "bitter."

4 Call me Mara for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty.

1 So Naomi returned to Judah, together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They arrived at the beginning of the barley harvest.

3 Naomi

2 no longer a stranger, no longer hungry

4 Did what was best for her family.

3 And Ruth

2 Her friend, her companion

4 Walked every mile by her side.

1 This is the Word of God.

ALL Thanks be to God.

1 Amen.



Children's Activity I: Puzzle of Compassion

Materials needed:

- Blank puzzle with large pieces from a craft store, OR a very large piece of thick paper
- Crayons and markers

Preparation:

On the puzzle or paper, write in large letters with a black permanent marker, “Where you go, we will go.” Add whatever other flare you’d like—perhaps the outline of a heart, or globe, or a path. Then take the puzzle apart/cut the paper into large pieces of different shapes.

- 1 Distribute one piece to each child and ask them to color it with their favorite colors, however they’d like. Ask them to make it their own—the best representation of their unique selves.
- 2 Then ask them to put the puzzle together as a group. Explain that every person has a unique piece that is needed to complete the picture.
- 3 When the puzzle is finished and the message is revealed, explain that “where you go, we will go” means working together and making sure that no one feels like they are alone. By sharing our unique pieces with each other, we create something beautiful that makes God happy. Talk to them about how, sometimes, people have to leave their homes because of something out of their control, like violence in their countries. This would be a good time to bring in the Ruth and Naomi story, because they were refugees too. Share that over half of the 60 million refugees and displaced persons in the world are children. Share that refugees and displaced persons cannot return to their homes. Ask them about the ways that leaving their home might make them feel? Bring it back to the puzzle by saying that all the thoughts they just shared can make it easy to feel like you are one piece that is too far away from the other pieces of the puzzle to put together a beautiful picture.
- 4 Explain that Week of Compassion is one way that we can help put the puzzle together anyway. It is a way to give gifts which show God’s love to people around the world. Make sure to emphasize that God’s puzzle is so much bigger than we can imagine—that it covers the whole world, and that every little boy and girl in every country has their own piece of the puzzle that is different than everybody else’s. Celebrate how wonderful it is that God made us need each other to put all the pieces together.

Children's Activity II: Popsicle Stick House

Around the world, more than 1.6 billion people live without a safe house to call home. Sometimes that means they have no house at all.* Sometimes it means the house they live in is damaged or falling down or does not have a safe place for people to cook or use the bathroom. For more than 1 billion people it means living in temporary shelters, or places that are only meant to be lived in for a short time. Refugees and displaced persons often have to live in camps where their houses are large tents or simple rooms similar to this model (See photographs on pages 14, 20, 36, 43). Money donated through Week of Compassion helps provide shelter to people who otherwise would not have a safe place to live.

**source: UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing, 2005 and www.habitat.org*

As you build your popsicle stick house, tell your group about the housing challenges many people face. You might also ask the group to describe their own houses or to identify what is missing from the popsicle stick house (possible responses: a door, windows, a bathroom, a kitchen, and privacy).

Materials Needed

(Adult supervision is recommended)

- Standard popsicle sticks (4.5" x 0.375")
- Elmer's glue or glue gun with low-temp glue sticks
- Exacto knife or scissors for cutting

1 (Figure A):

Lay 12 sticks side-by-side. Place 3 perpendicular sticks on top of the first layer, using Elmer's glue or hot glue to secure the supports.

You'll need to create THREE copies of this piece, which will become the floor of the house, the back wall of house, and the roof.

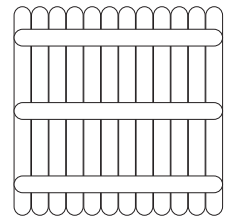


FIGURE A

2 (Figure B):

Lay 12 sticks side-by-side. Place 2 perpendicular sticks on top of the first layer, making sure these supports are near the top and bottom (to allow space for the window in the middle). Use Elmer's glue or hot glue to secure the supports. Using an Exacto knife or scissors, cut a hole in the center 5 sticks to create a window. Cut 2 small support sticks and glue those on either side of the window.

You'll need to create TWO copies of this piece, which will become the side walls of the house.

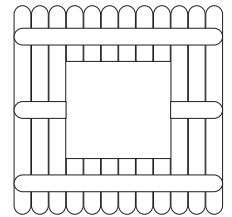


FIGURE B

3 (Figure C):

Lay 12 sticks side-by-side. Place 1 perpendicular stick on top of the first layer, making sure these supports are near the top (to allow space for the door underneath). Use Elmer's glue or hot glue to secure the support.

Using an Exacto knife or scissors, cut short the center 5 sticks to create the door. Cut 4 small support sticks and glue those on either side of the door.

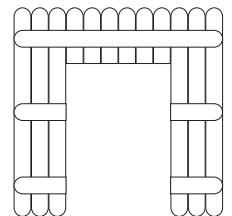
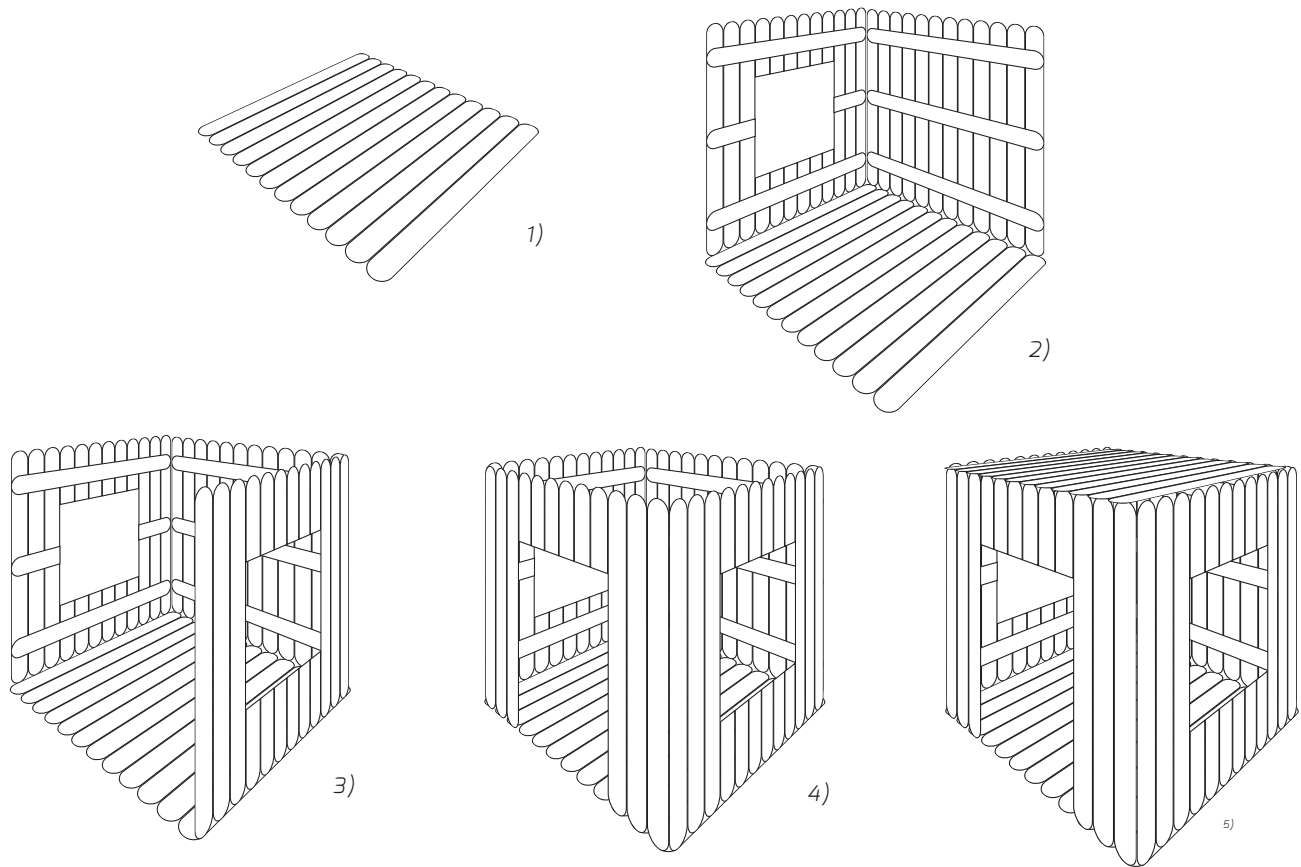


FIGURE C

4 Construct Your House

1. Lay the floor piece of your house flat on the table. Make sure your support pieces are underneath and not visible from above.
2. Take one Figure A wall piece and one Figure B wall piece. Stand them up on two adjoining sides of the floor piece. The support pieces should run parallel to the floor and placed on the inside of the house (not visible from the outside). Use glue to connect both pieces to the floor and to each other.

3. Place the remaining Figure B wall piece opposite the Figure B already in position. The support pieces should run parallel to the floor and placed on the inside of the house (not visible from the outside).
4. Use glue to connect the piece to the floor and to the Figure A wall already in position.
5. Place the Figure C piece in the fourth wall position. The support pieces should run parallel to the floor and placed on the inside of the house (not visible from the outside). Use glue to connect the piece to the floor and to the walls on either side.
6. Place the remaining Figure A on top of the house. The support pieces should not be visible from above. Use glue to secure it to all four standing walls.



Scripture Lesson

“Where you go, I will go; where you stay, I will stay; your people will be my people.” (Ruth 1:16)

What do you think that means?

If someone has less than you, what can you do to help them have more?

Care Package

God created you. There is no one quite like you; you are unique and beloved by God. You are God’s very own care package! So what is inside you that you could share with others who need your care? Can you think of ways you could care for others who may not have what they need? What items would your care package contain that you could share?

(Your care package could include a hug, a smile, a helping hand, your offering, your prayers, etc.)

Your Offerings Are a Care Package for the World

When you collect offerings in your Week of Compassion coin box, which you can see is designed to look like a refugee tent, those coins and dollars turn into things that people need. When we have more than we need, we have the opportunity to share with others! WoC is like a care package from God and you for those in need in the world. Color below the things that your WOC offerings do to help others:

(Suggested images: food, water, a blanket, animals, shelter, school supplies, medicine, seeds, shovel, etc.)

Tongue Twister

Say three times as fast as you can:

Our sharing shall surely show the shining love of God!

What can you share with others?

- Collect coins and dollars in your Week of Compassion coin box
- Your lunch at school
- Help a neighbor who needs help at home
- Make cards to send to children in an area hospital
- Make art projects for nursing home residents
- Plant a community garden with your family and friends
- Collect canned goods for a local food bank
- Volunteer at a soup kitchen in your community
- Welcome a refugee family in your congregation
- Organize a blanket drive in your church (<http://www.cwsglobal.org/get-involved/cws-blankets/blankets.html>)
- Put together a CWS Hygiene, School, Baby or Clean-Up Bucket (<http://www.churchworldservice.org/kits/index.html>)
- Walk in the local CROP Walk to fight hunger (<http://www.churchworldservice.org/CROP/index.html>)

Youth Activity I: We Need Each Other to Feed Each Other

Materials needed

- Ingredients for the Recipe
- Baking Tools
- Access to a Kitchen

This activity is intended to illustrate that each one of us has an important job to do in God's kingdom. Some jobs seem bigger, and some tools seem smaller, but each one is necessary if we're going to change the world. Just like Naomi needed Ruth, Ruth needed Naomi, and both of them needed Boaz and he needed them. In the same way, we need each other to make sure all are fed, and none of us is more important than another.

Instructions

Choose a recipe according to the size of your youth group. A boxed brownie mix would work well for a small group, and a from-scratch recipe would work better for a larger group. If you'd like to draw a deeper connection to Ruth's story, use the recipe for a quick barley bread (instructions below). Emphasize that Boaz worked the field, and Ruth collected the barley and beat it so Naomi could bake the bread.

Distribute the ingredients, one by one, so that every student has one item—either an ingredient or a tool (spoon, bowl, spatula, etc.). Make sure to give the recipe to someone. Tell the students they are the only one who can use the tool or ingredient they've been given. They have been given the responsibility of taking care of it and properly using it, and ultimately sharing it with the rest of the group.

Then tell the recipe-holders to make the recipe all by themselves. Make the point that having instructions is only worth something if you also have ingredients and tools.

Then tell the group that their mission is to bake the treat on the recipe card, and ask what might happen if the recipe-holder were to lose the recipe, or drop it in water, or tear it up. How would the group be able to complete their mission? Ask what would happen if the person holding the mixing bowl were to break the bowl. Then where would they be? Emphasize that each person's tool or ingredient is necessary for completing the mission.

While the treat is baking, use this time to teach your group about refugees in our world today. Explain that refugees are persons who have had to flee their home country and cannot return for fear of persecution based on their race, religion, politics, or association with a certain social group. Share that over 80 percent of refugees are hosted by developing countries. Ask the group to imagine how their life would change if they had to leave their country based on the color of their skin, or that they came to youth group/church that day. What would be the most difficult thing about such a sudden and drastic relocation? What would be the most frightening? Be sure to mention that there are nearly 60 million forcibly displaced people in the world (refugees, those seeking asylum, and internally displaced people combined), and that over half of refugees are under the age of 18. For reference, 60 million is slightly less than the population of the entire country of Italy. Those people are often without adequate food and clean water, and they live in danger or fear or both. Ask the group to consider what a blessing it is to be able to freely meet at church, to gather together, and to bake delicious bread that can be broken and shared.

Then turn the conversation a bit, and ask the group to share gifts they see in each other or in themselves. Use this as a time to encourage each other. Discuss how important it is to take responsibility for those gifts, to take care of them, and to share them. Talk about being good stewards of our talents, our finances, and ourselves, and how part of caring for those things is being will to give them away. Talk about sharing generously.

Tie it all together by reminding the group that the Week of Compassion offering is a place where we can be generous with our time and treasure, giving to brothers and sisters around the world who have been displaced. Be sure to emphasize that, just like each student contributed a unique ingredient to the bread, so each person (refugees included) has a unique offering to bring to God's table as well. Remind them that we all need each other to complete the meal, and that walking together—like Ruth and Naomi—we can receive as well as give.

When it's time to pull the treat out of the oven, distribute one of the batches. Enjoy it. Savor the time together in community, just as you savor the delicious flavor. Turn the conversation to gratitude and thanksgiving, emphasizing the blessings of gifts given—given to and from God, and to and from each other. What a beautiful communion.

If you doubled the recipe, share the second batch with someone else—another class, or give each student one piece to take home and share with someone else. Emphasize giving, sharing, and caring for others.

Close with a prayer below, and a petition to open the students' eyes to see when and how they might give to others and answer God's call to love.

“Dear God of Love, hear our prayers for the millions of refugees and displaced persons of the world. Be with those who are forced to flee their homes due to widespread violence, and hunger, and fear. Guide us to show our compassion through our actions. Lead us in solidarity, so that we may stand beside our brothers and sisters across the world who have been stripped of security and refuge. Open our hearts. Use our gifts in service to those in need. Oh God, we pray that every child belonging to you know that they have accompaniment on their journeys. Where they go, we will go. You created each of us to not be alone, to need one another. Bless our gifts and talents in service of solidarity and connectedness. We pray these things to you, Oh God. Amen.”

Quick Barley Bread

Total Time: 50 min

Prep: 10 min

Cook: 40 min

Ingredients

- 10 ounces barley flour, approximately 3 cups
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 ounce baking powder, approximately 2 1/2 tablespoons
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1/4 cup canola oil, plus extra for pan
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup whole milk



CREATIVE COMMONS PHOTO

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Lightly rub the sides and bottom of a 4 to 5-quart Dutch oven with canola oil and set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, salt and baking powder. In a small mixing bowl, whisk together the honey, 1/4 cup oil, eggs and milk. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until combined.

Pour the batter into the prepared Dutch oven; do not cover with a lid. Place the Dutch oven in the oven. Bake for 25 to 30 minutes or until the internal temperature reaches 190 degrees F. Allow to cool in Dutch oven for at least 5 minutes before turning out onto a cooling rack.

Recipe courtesy of Alton Brown, 2006

Youth Activity II: Where you go, I will go

For this activity you will need enough blindfolds for half of the youth in your group. It would also be helpful to have a white board, chalk board, or giant pad of paper for a reflective discussion after the activity.

Instructions

Before your lesson, write down several sets of different instructions on slips of paper that can be followed in whatever location your youth will gather. Things like, “Go to the water fountain and take a drink.” “Go to the kitchen and count how many different kinds of food are in the refrigerator.” “Go to the sanctuary and grab a Bible.” Make the instructions as simple or as complicated as you’d like, but try to have at least half as many sets of instructions as you have students.

Once the youth have gathered, read the scripture in Ruth. Then split your students into pairs and distribute blindfolds—one for each pair. Ask the pair to decide who will be the leader, and who will follow. Have the followers don their blindfolds, and distribute one set of instructions to each leader. Tell the leader to lead the follower using only their voice (no touching!) and without revealing the instructions until they’ve arrived at their destination. When they’ve completed the task, ask them to come back to your gathering place and return the fulfilled instructions.

When all the pairs have returned, surprise them with a switch. Ask the leaders to put on blindfolds, and then redistribute instructions (so everyone has different ones) and ask the followers to lead. Once again, ask them to return to the gathering place after they finish.

After all the pairs have once again returned, ask everyone to gather around the white board (if using). Ask the people who followed in the first round to share their experience. What was it like to be led without seeing? How well did their leader lead? What did they wish the leader did differently? Were they ever nervous or frustrated? As they respond, write down key words that described their experience on the left side of the board.

Then ask the leaders in the first round what it was like to lead a person who couldn’t see. What was it like to not be able to reach out and lead them by the hand? Did they ever get frustrated? Write down these responses on the right hand side of the board.

Then ask the leaders how they felt when they were told they would now become followers. What was their response? Were they angry, excited, nervous? Did any of them worry that their performance as a leader would affect the way they were led? Add any key words to the “follower” side of the board.

Draw the connection to the 60 million refugees and displaced persons in the world. Explain that refugees are people who must leave their homes because they are not safe, and go to places where they’ve never been. In many ways, these people are not able to see where they’re going, or what’s coming next, and are often surprised to find themselves “blindfolded” (like the second round of “Follow the Leader”). Use that part of the activity to illustrate that we all are in need of someone to walk with at different points in our lives—that none of us are better or more valuable than another. Trying to find your way in a new place is tedious when you have to feel your way alone, and it’s scary, and can be lonely and dangerous. The blindfolded students’ journeys through the church were surely difficult, but imagine how much more difficult it would be to follow those instructions without anyone walking with them? (If you created instructions for your “leaders” similar to the suggestions above, be sure to point out that refugees often do not have access to clean water or food, and sometimes are forced to leave their homes because of their faith).

Make the connection to Ruth and Naomi. Remind the students that these women were refugees, too, leaving their land to find food and safety. But they were not alone. They leaned on each other, and they walked that frightening, unknown road together.

Tell the students that the Week of Compassion offering is one way we can walk with refugees and displaced people around the world. Even though we are not close enough to touch them, we can offer support through our generous giving. We can walk together through this dark time, and we can all count on the promise of God to guide our feet, no matter where we go.



Intergenerational Activity: Where You Go, I Will Go. Literally.

This activity will require a coordinator and a few weeks of preparation.

In the weeks leading up to the Week of Compassion offering, as you promote the offering, encourage the congregation to participate in a community walk to raise awareness for refugees as well. Call the walk the “We Go Together” or the “Solidarity Stride.”

Map out one (or several) one mile routes through your church’s neighborhood or your broader community. After worship on Week of Compassion Sunday, as a congregation (in one group or several), walk the route. As you go, plan to offer some kind of service to the community: pick up trash along the road, pass out information about refugee relief, distribute water bottles or popsicles or hot chocolate to every person you meet on the way, give blankets or hats or gloves to the homeless. If you can, wear matching shirts, bracelets, or bandanas to demonstrate your solidarity. When people ask what you’re doing say, “We are walking with our community, in solidarity with the poor, the hungry, the homeless, the refugees, because Jesus asked us to love our neighbors—near and far.” An alternative option is to ask parishioners to do the same thing on their own time during the week as small groups or families, with the addition of inviting folks to come to church on Sunday.

At the end of the walk, host a simple meal at the church to celebrate. Charge a certain dollar amount per person or ask for a donation and add what is collected to the offering. Over sandwiches or hotdogs, share stories from the walk and discuss the personal impact of serving the community in solidarity with each other. Make sure to talk about the things we can learn from those we serve.

Dramatic Interpretation: Better with a Buddy

A skit by Amanda Garcia

<End Scene>

This skit is for two actors, one “runner” and one “non-runner.” It is written as two women, but could just as easily be any aged male or female. The names “Natalie” and “Colleen” can be changed to the actual names of the actors from the congregation.

<Natalie jogs across the stage in running gear, running shoes, with a water bottle. She has headphones in her ears.>

<She stops to catch her breath at the edge of the stage and checks her pulse>

<Just then, Colleen, who is gasping for breath, slowly “jogs” to where Natalie is and collapses on the ground>

NATALIE: Colleen! Where did you come from?

COLLEEN: I've been chasing you for three blocks! Didn't you hear me calling?

NATALIE: I'm so sorry, I had my headphones in and didn't hear you. Are you okay?

COLLEEN, still breathing heavily: Yeah, I'm alright. *<She sits up.>* Just trying to catch my breath.

NATALIE: Why were you chasing me? What's going on?

COLLEEN, sitting, still sprawled out on the ground: You know the Week of Compassion offering is this week at church, right? That special offering we do every year to raise money for our partners who provide food and water and shelter and empowerment to displaced people and refugees around the world?

NATALIE: Yeah, I remember hearing about that. So?

COLLEEN: Well, this year all the money is specifically going to help refugees, and people who have been displaced by violence. They asked me to put together a little skit to promote the offering and inspire people to give, and I wondered if you'd give me a hand?

<Natalie extends a hand and helps Colleen to her feet.>

NATALIE: Sure, I guess I could help. What's the theme again?

COLLEEN: It's "Where you go, I will go," so I thought we could maybe do something where I'm an amazing ultra marathoner, and you're my coach and cheer me on and join me as I run across the finish line. Wouldn't that be great? I'm thinking there's ticker tape involved. Maybe a smoke machine.

NATALIE: Sure... that could work. But there's a lot more to running a race than the finish line.

COLLEEN: Okay, okay. I guess I haven't been running in... a while... so why don't you remind me.

NATALIE: Well, for starters, you need plenty of water, so that you don't get dehydrated and your muscles don't cramp.

COLLEEN: Everybody needs water. Especially refugees. *<She grabs Natalie's water bottle and takes a drink.>* A lot of times, they don't have any clean water—or food.

NATALIE: Food is also super important when you're running a race. You need good calories so that you have the energy to go that kind of distance.

COLLEEN: A marathon is more than 26 miles, right? I bet you also need good shoes if you were going that far on foot.

NATALIE: You sure do. I wonder how many refugees have shoes when they're trying to run away from danger and get to a safe place.

COLLEEN: Seriously... *<thinking>* Did you know that refugees are people who have to leave their country because they are being persecuted, just because of their race, or political views, or even their faith?

NATALIE: Yeah, it's awful. And Internally Displaced People are those who don't leave their country, but have to leave their hometowns because of conflict and violence. I think I heard that there were almost 60 million people who were forced to leave their homes for one reason or another in 2015.

COLLEEN: And I bet they all needed shoes, and food, and water... See?! This is why we need to do an amazing skit so people will give to the offering!

NATALIE: I know, I know!

COLLEEN: But what can we do?! *<starts pacing back and forth, scratching her head.>*

NATALIE: You know, *<pondering>* when you're struggling though a really long race, one thing that helps the very most is having a buddy, or a group of buddies. When you're exhausted, and hungry, and thirsty, and you can't see the end, and all you want to do is give up, having other people running with you is really what gets you through.

COLLEEN: Sure, yeah, that makes sense... *<The girls look intently at each other and there's a comedic pause while Natalie waits for Colleen to to get it.>* So what's your point?

NATALIE: *<laughing>* The theme is "where you go, I will go," right? Well, maybe doing it *together* is the key. Maybe we can ask people to accompany displaced people and refugees, by giving to the offering. You know, like we're all running the race together, or something?

COLLEEN: Oh, I get it! That's a great idea! *<high five!>*

NATALIE: We better start writing a script.

COLLEEN: Yeah! *<She quickly turns to run off stage but stumbles and loses her balance. Natalie grabs her arm and holds her up.>* Ouch! I think I pulled something.

NATALIE: Just lean on me. Let's do this together. *<Colleen puts her arm around Natalie's shoulders and they walk off stage, Colleen limping slightly.>*

COLLEEN, as they exit: So, do you think we could still get a smoke machine...?

Statistics and Facts

Refugees and the Displaced

- By the end of 2014, 59.5 million individuals have been forcibly displaced across the world, which breaks down to 19.5 million refugees, 38.2 million internally displaced persons, and 1.8 million asylum-seekers. *Source: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), June 2015*
- An estimated 13.9 million persons were newly displaced due to conflict or persecution in 2014. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- Developing countries are host to 86% of the world's refugees, with wealthy countries caring for just 14%. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- Unaccompanied children are arriving in the U.S. at unprecedented numbers. From October 2013 to June 2014, more than 52,000 unaccompanied children were apprehended while crossing the southern border. This is twice the number for the same period last in 2013. Advocates cite violence, gangs, crime, and neglect or abuse as factors driving the migration. *Source: Immigration Advocates Network*
- The top ten countries hosting refugees are Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ethiopia, Jordan, Kenya, Chad, Uganda, and China. Together, they host 57% of the world's refugee population. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- 50 percent of the world's refugees are children. *Source: International Refugee Committee*
- Of the 1.5 million internally displaced people in Haiti since the 2010 earthquake, nearly 1.2 million have left camps and relocated. *Source: World Bank*
- Since at least the 1840s, when the Irish potato famine killed 1 million people and drove 2 million overseas, poverty and hunger have been major causes of immigration to the United States. *Source: Bread for the World*
- Today, approximately 40 million immigrants live in the United States—13 percent of the population. About one-fourth of all immigrants to the U.S.—about 11 million people—are unauthorized. *Source: Bread for the World*
- In Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of refugees increased for the fifth consecutive year, standing at 3.7 million by year end. Multiple refugee crises across sub-saharan Africa in recent years have led to the highest such levels observed in two decades. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- In the Asia and Pacific region, the total number of refugees, including individuals in a refugee-like situation, was estimated at more than 3.8 million at the end of 2014, a net increase of about 300,000 persons. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- The United States of America registered an estimated 121,200 individual asylum claims in 2014, a 44% increase from the year before. 42% of all asylum claims in the U.S. were lodged by asylum-seekers from Mexico and Central America. *Source: UNHCR, June 2015*
- “The number of people around the world forced by conflict to flee their homes, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported, has soared past 51 million, the highest number since World War II. That's more than six times the population of New York City, emptied into squalid camps.” *Source: New York Times, June 20, 2014 (www.nytimes.com/2014/06/22/opinion/sunday/in-refugee-statistics-a-stark-tale-of-global-strife.html?_r=0)*

Poverty

- Nearly 1.5 billion people in developing countries live in extreme poverty, living on less than \$1.25 a day. *Source: Bread for the World*
- The extreme poor live on less than \$1.25 a day. Many lack basic sanitation and clean drinking water; they're malnourished and suffer from lack of education. *Source: World Bank*
- 2.5 billion people lack access to proper sanitation; 1.1 billion still practice open defecation. *Source: WHO/UNICEF*
- About 75% of the world's poor people live in rural areas and depend on agriculture for their livelihood. *Source: Bread for the World*

- Most Americans, approximately 51.4 percent, will live in poverty at some point before age 65. *Source: Urban Institute*
- 23 out of every 1,000 children in Vietnam will die before their 5th birthday. *Source: World Bank*
- In Latin America, 1 in every 4 people aged 15-29 is poor or extremely poor. *Source: United Nations Development Program*
- Between 1990 and 2010, the poverty rate across Latin America decreased from 48.4 percent to 31.4 percent, while the rate of indigence – or extreme poverty – fell from 22.6 percent to 12.3 percent. *Source: United Nations*
- Only 17.2 percent of Kenya's government budget is spent on education. *Source: UNESCO*
- African youth are more likely to be underemployed and among the working poor than the general population. *Source: International Labor Organization*

Hunger

- One in eight people still go to bed hungry in our world. *Source: UNDP*
- Every day, almost 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes. *Source: Bread for the World*
- In the United States, 14.5 percent of households struggle to put food on the table. *Source: Bread for the World*
- More than one in four American children are at risk of hunger. More than one in five children live in households that struggle to put food on the table. *Source: Bread for the World*
- More people escaped poverty during the 2000s than any other decade in history. *Source: Bread for the World*
- Each year, under-nutrition is responsible for as many as 2.6 million deaths of children under age 5, one-third of the total number of children's deaths. *Source: UNICEF*
- World-wide, 1 in 8 persons is under-nourished. That means a total of 870 million in all do not eat enough to be healthy. *Source: World Food Program*
- 870 million people in the world are chronically food insecure. *Source: CARE*
- Nearly half of Pakistan's population of 180 million live in food insecure households. *Source: UNICEF*
- Asia has the largest number of the world's hungry, more than 560 million. *Source: WFP*
- In countries with high levels of childhood malnutrition, the economic loss can be as high as 2-3 percent of GDP. *Source: Bread for the World*
- 14.5 percent of U.S. households struggle to put enough food on the table. More than 48 million Americans—including 15.9 million children—live in these households. *Source: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture*

Water

- 11 percent of the world's population still doesn't have access to clean drinking water. *Source: UN*
- 783 million people do not have access to clean water and almost 2.5 billion do not have access to adequate sanitation. *Source: UN*
- In Africa alone, people spend 40 billion hours every year walking for water. Women and children usually bear the burden of water collection, walking miles to the nearest source, which is unprotected and likely contaminated. *Source: Charity Water*
- In rural Cambodia, only about 1 out of every 2 people has access to drinking water that is free of disease and pollution. *Source: UN*
- Diseases from unsafe water and lack of basic sanitation kill more people every year than all forms of violence, including war. *Source: WHO*

- Children are especially vulnerable to water-borne diseases, as their bodies aren't strong enough to fight diarrhea, dysentery and other illnesses. 90% of the 30,000 deaths that occur every week from unsafe water and unhygienic living conditions are in children under five years old. Source: WHO
- 3.4 million people die each year from a water related disease. Source: water.org

Gender and Development

- 774 million adults – 64 percent of whom are women – still lack basic reading and writing skills. Source: UNESCO
- Women and girls account for six out of 10 of the world's poorest and two-thirds of the world's illiterate people. Source: UNDP
- If female farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry people in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million. Source: WFP
- The world's poorest inhabitants – six out of ten of whom are female – are the most severely affected by increasingly longer droughts, more severe storms and flooding, species depletion, soil degradation, deforestation, and other negative alterations to the natural environment. Source: UNDP
- Women spend 200 million hours a day collecting water. Source: water.org
- About half of all girls worldwide attend schools without toilets. The lack of privacy causes many girls to drop out when they reach puberty. Source: water.org
- Women do 66% of the world's work but own only 1% of its property. Source: IRC
- “Less than 1% of U.S. foreign aid is specifically targeted to women and girls.” Source: *Half the Sky*, Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn

Disasters

- 53% of people affected by disasters live in developing countries. Source: UN
- 3 out of every 4 people impacted by disaster worldwide live in Asia. Source: UN
- In the context of emergencies, vulnerable groups may include individuals with disabilities, pregnant women, children, elderly persons, prisoners, certain members of ethnic minorities, people with language barriers, and the impoverished. Source: UC Davis Law Review
- Wild weather and unpredictable seasons are changing what farmers can grow and is making people hungry. Food prices are going up. Food quality is going down. Soon, climate change will affect what all of us can eat. Source: Oxfam
- “Storms, floods, famine, cyclones, drought, typhoons, earthquakes, mudslides, avalanches. Each year for the past decade, an average of 258 million people have lived through some kind of disaster – in total, this is the equivalent of almost half of the world's population.” Source: Christian Aid
- More than 50 times as many people were affected by disasters in developing countries as in developed countries. Source: Christian Aid
- Each year, the death toll from disasters is growing greater – from 84,570 in 1995 to 249,896 ten years later. Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
- “In Bangladesh, an average of 12 to 13 tropical storms strike every year. These storms and cyclones are among the most destructive in the world. While they only contribute around 5% of the global total of storms they account for about 75% of global losses from storms in terms of lives and property.” Source: Christian Aid
- “In Malawi, poor rains repeatedly result in pitiful harvests. When crops fail up and down the country, thousands of children are reduced to eating just one meal a day or less. It's not lack of rain that leads to this. It is people's poverty that prevents them storing food and having the funds to plant more crops.” Source: Christian Aid

Rights and Protection

- There are more than 370 million indigenous peoples living in 90 countries across the globe. Source: UN

Quotes

"Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human."

- HENRI J.M. NOUWEN

"A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees."

-AMELIA EARHART

"We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean, but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop."

-MOTHER TERESA

"There is a nobility in compassion, a beauty in empathy, a grace in forgiveness."

-JOHN CONNOLLY

"If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion."

-DALAI LAMA XIV

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched - they must be felt with the heart."

-HELEN KELLER

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

-THEODORE ROOSEVELT

"It is not with your own wealth that you give alms to the poor, but with a fraction of their own which you give back; for you are usurping for yourself something meant for the common good of all. The earth is for everyone, not only for the rich."

- ST. AMBROSE

"You know, the only time Christ is judgmental is on the subject of the poor. 'As you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me (Matthew 25:40)'. As I say, good news to the poor."

-BONO

"I hope my life tries to give testimony to the message of the Gospel, above all that God loves the world and loves those who are poorest within it."

-GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ

"The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

-FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

"If I see the gift as mine alone to give, I might give hesitantly, even grudgingly, considering my options, then giving from a sense of ought. If I see the gift as God's who allows me to use it for a time, then the gift can flow more freely, as I join with others to be a channel for God's love and mercy."

-ROBERTA PORTER

"If you don't like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time."

-MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

"It just seems to me that as long as we are both here, it's pretty clear that the struggle is to share the planet, rather than to divide it."

-ALICE WALKER

"For it is in giving that we receive."

-ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI

"You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."

-JANE GOODALL

"Compassion is the sometimes fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else's skin. It's the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too."

-FREDERICK BUECHNER

"I have found that among its other benefits, giving liberates the soul of the giver."

-MAYA ANGELOU

"We were not put on earth to make ourselves happy. The path to true happiness lies in helping others."

-HELEN CALDICOTT

"Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It's a relationship between equals. Only when we know our own darkness well can we be present with the darkness of others. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity."
-PEMA CHÖDRÖN

"Giving frees us from the familiar territory of our own needs by opening our mind to the unexplained worlds occupied by the needs of others."
-BARBARA BUSH

"I cannot think of a better definition of Christianity than that: give, give, give."
-JAMES I. MCCORD

"Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege."
-JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR.

"Stewardship is the act of organizing your life so that God can spend you."
-LYNN A. MILLER

"If you think you are too small to make a difference, you haven't spent a night with a mosquito."
-AFRICAN PROVERB

"Poverty is the greatest form of violence."
-GANDHI

"The churches have to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. But they have also to remember that the answer to homelessness is homes, not shelters. What the poor and downtrodden need is not piecemeal charity but wholesale justice."
-WILLIAM SLOANE COFFIN

"Each and every one of us has the opportunity to make choices - moving beyond a question like, 'How is it that you ask a drink of me?' and stretching towards holiness, where seeds are planted and harvested, where water is drawn from wells, and where all of us are invited to the feast and to drink without reservation, because we understand in our hearts, in our minds, and in the depths of our souls what it means to be human, and believe that truly, there is enough for all."
-JOHN MCCULLOUGH, CEO AND PRESIDENT, CWS

"The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself but the ends you serve that are for all, in common, will take you into eternity."
-MARCUS GARVEY

"The point is not that Jesus was a good guy who accepted everybody, and thus we should do the same (though that would be good). Rather, his teachings and behavior reflect an alternative social vision. Jesus was not talking about how to be good and how to behave within the framework of a domination system. He was a critic of the domination system itself."

-MARCUS J. BORG

"Genuine equality means not treating everyone the same, but attending equally to everyone's different needs."

- TERRY EAGLETON

"There is more beauty than our eyes can bear, precious things have been put into our hands and to do nothing to honor them is to do great harm."

-MARILYNNE ROBINSON

"All I ever wanted was to reach out and touch another human being not just with my hands but with my heart."

-TAHEREH MAFI

"No one has ever become poor by giving."

- ANNE FRANK

"Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them, humanity cannot survive."

-DALAI LAMA XIV

"When we give cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed."

- MAYA ANGELOU

"That's what I consider true generosity: You give your all, and yet you always feel as if it costs you nothing."

-SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR

"Compassion is a verb."

-THÍCH NHAT HANH

"Good works is giving to the poor and the helpless, but divine works is showing them their worth to the One who matters."

- CRISS JAMI

"Giving does not only precede receiving; it is the reason for it. It is in giving that we receive."

- ISRAELMORE AYIVOR

"To make an option for the poor is to make an option for Jesus."
-GUSTAVO GUTIERREZ

"Whatever God does, the first outburst is always compassion."
-MEISTER ECKHART

"You must be the change you wish to see in the world."
-GANDHI



Minutes For Mission

Minute for Mission A

Our Bible is filled with stories of journeys. From the chronicle of how God's spirit moved across creation in search of a caretaker in Genesis, to Jesus' call in the Great Commission - to go and make Disciples in all nations - the People of God have been on the move.

Unfortunately, sometimes that movement reflects the last possible choice for families in crisis. War, disaster, a changing climate or devastated economy have forced millions over the years to seek safety as refugees.

Since 1946, Church World Service, the relief, development and refugee assistance ministry of 37 member communions such as ours, has been called to resettle refugees, allowing them to escape warfare, civil strife, oppression and statelessness. Since the end of World War II, your mission partner, CWS, has offered life-giving resettlement to more than 800,000 persons. At every step of the way, there have been congregations like ours who have stepped forward to serve as co-sponsors, mentors and friends to newly arrived refugees on behalf of the Church.

Today we celebrate that effort and recognize that the world is facing a refugee crisis we have not seen in generations. At this moment, there are more refugees in the world than at any time since World War II. Fighting rages in Syria, with families fleeing for safety. Sectarian violence has forced men, women and children from their homes in the Central African Republic on a scale that has not been seen in decades. Persecution of minority groups like Rohingya endures in Asia.

The threat of violence forces parents to send their children away, unaccompanied, in Central and Latin America because for them, sending their children away, alone or in the care of strangers is an even safer option than staying put. Week of Compassion helps us to be there for them.

The offering we make today is steeped in more than just decades of tradition. It is rooted in responding to Christ's call to welcome the stranger. The Week of Compassion offering connects our church's resources to others to provide help beyond just emergency food, water and shelter. Our offering will help people in need begin a new life free from violence, persecution, shifting climate -- a new life with hope for the future.

From the journey of his Disciples in following Jesus in his ministry to John's writing of the Book of Revelation, in exile, on the Isle of Patmos, the people of God have been on the move. We have the chance today to answer God's call. Let us respond generously to help as one Church. As we offer our gifts, let us be mindful not only of the assistance for those forced to flee their homes. May we also recognize that in giving, we, too are moved in our journey to live ever more in Christ's image.

Minute for Mission B

Our faith calls us to respond to people in crisis. Sometimes crises occur from forces of nature and sometimes they are the result of violent acts of persecution: what we - human beings - do to each other. The gospel has much to say about this. It empowers us to respond in our own time, as we reflect upon the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

The current conflict in Syria is the world's single largest refugee crisis in nearly a quarter of a century. The four-year conflict has forced more than 9 million people from their homes. That's more than 40 percent of the country's pre-war population. Over 4 million Syrian refugees who have fled to neighboring countries, and an additional 7 million remain displaced inside Syria - in cities, towns and rural areas.

Life for Syrians in exile is increasingly difficult. Most live below the poverty line and in sub-standard shelters. Hope of returning home diminishes each year the civil war continues. As the rate of poverty increases among refugees, practices such as child labor and child marriage are on the rise amongst families in the deepest crisis. In the already vulnerable surrounding countries, communities are straining to sustain support for refugees as competition for employment, land, housing, water and energy grows.

We can respond to the crisis in Syria and to other tragedies across the globe. Donations to *Week of Compassion* not only sustain a response to issues of global refugee displacement and war, they go to support our efforts to welcome refugees as they arrive in the U.S. and adjust to a new life.

Matthew 25 states: *"Come, you that are blessed. . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me. . ."*

This passage marks some of Jesus' final words to his disciples before ascending to heaven. The text is more than a call to help - it is a final judgment on whether Christ's people have acted with compassion towards those in need. Here we learn that the 'good news' comes first to the ones in crisis. Christ comes to us as the "least" - the hungry, the stranger, the naked, the sick and the prisoner.

Week of Compassion provides an opportunity to act *together*. In Syria. In Africa. In Asia, and Latin America - wherever there are needs for care, to live out Christ's call.

As we heed the call of our faith - across denominations, working together in unity, as one ecumenical body - we are invited to make more of an impact than any one of us could alone. Together we can make a difference. Not only can we address the immediate needs of those displaced by war and persecution, we can also address the long-term issues of poverty and social injustice. This is the gospel mandate, and the gospel hope.

The Committee for Week of Compassion

2013-2016

James Rapp, Southwest Region
Cheryl Sybrant, Great River Region

2014-2017

Susan Gonzales Dewey, Pacific Southwest Region
Richie Sanchez, Indiana Region

2015-2018

Judith Frost, Illinois and Wisconsin Region
Mark Briley, Oklahoma Region

2016-2019

Cindy Kim, Illinois and Wisconsin Region
Cornelius Lloyd, Georgia Region

Representatives from General Units and Ministries

Paul Tche, Council on Christian Unity

Lee Parker, Disciples Home Missions

Julia Brown Karimu, Division of Overseas Ministries

April Johnson, Reconciliation Ministries

Ex-officio

Sharon Watkins, General Minister and President

Vy Nguyen, Executive Director, Week of Compassion

Staff

Caroline Hamilton-Arnold, Associate Director

Mary Jacobs, Interim Resource Development Director

Sharing Calendar, 2016

Both joy and compassionate urgency infuse God's great love for this world, and should likewise infuse our love for others shown through Week of Compassion. This special Sharing Calendar reminds us of the abundant blessings we have received, as well as the suffering in the world we can help address through this offering. Each day suggests a donation of units. Choose an amount for these units that is most appropriate for your household. ***"Sometimes you and I are the channels of God's love and grace to the world in need."* - Mark Pickett**

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Church World Service helps make schools in Kenya safer through their "School Safe Zones" program. Give one unit for every safe school your family members attend.	Because of foreign assistance, deaths of children under age 5 have dropped from 12.6 million to 6.6 million since 1990. Give two units to make that number even smaller.	Girls are often severely excluded from education systems, yet educated girls are key to reaching many other development goals. Give two units in honor of significant women in your life.	Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me... for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs." —Mark 10:14 Walk the extra mile with children around the world by giving two units today.	Millions of youth are illiterate in the world's poorest countries, yet education is critical to developing better job skills, health, and future. Give one unit if you can read these words.	More than 60,000 Syrian babies have been born in exile and are in danger of being categorized as stateless. Give one unit if you enjoy the benefits of citizenship.	Since 2014, over 57,000 unaccompanied children have fled violence to the U.S. Give one unit for children you care for, and one for those who cared for you as a child.
It is estimated that over 1.5 million persons have been internally displaced in Nigeria, many because of religious persecution. Give two units if you are free to attend church without fear.	About 45% of the world's refugees reside in countries with per capita incomes below \$3,000—countries least able to afford them. Please help! Contribute one unit.	Church World Service helps provide shelter for thousands of displaced persons at a refugee camp in Tanzania. Give one unit for every time you've been to camp and had a safe place to sleep.	Give counsel, grant justice... hide the outcasts, do not betray the fugitive... be a refuge to them." —Isaiah 16:3-4a Give one unit on behalf of displaced persons around the world today.	It is estimated that 9 million Syrians have been forcibly displaced since civil war began in 2011. Write at least one letter to Congress on their behalf (examples can be found at refint.org) and contribute one unit for each letter.	Church World Service works with many congregations to welcome more than 7,000 refugees to the U.S. every year. Give two units to celebrate the last time you were hospitable to others.	Conflict in South Sudan has forced more than 2 million people from their homes since 2013. Contribute one unit for every time your family has moved.
46.2 million U.S. Americans live in poverty. Help address poverty issues worldwide by giving two units.	One quarter of all humans live without electricity (approximately 1.6 billion people). Give one unit for every item you have plugged into an outlet at your house.	Nearly half the world's population (3 billion) live on less than \$2 per day, and over 1.3 billion on less than \$1.25 per day. Give two units if you will spend more than \$2 today.	Children, let us not love in word or speech, but in truth and action. —1 John 3:18 Take action today. Say a prayer and give as many units as you feel led.	Church World Service's Innovative Energy Technologies program has helped create self-sustaining communities that are now less susceptible to poverty. Give one unit for every energy efficient appliance in your home.	More than 1 billion children live in poverty around the world, and 22,000 children die every day because of it. Give one unit for every regular paycheck that your household collects.	Signs of poverty include inadequate income, housing, food, fresh water, opportunity, power over one's life and prospects, human dignity. Stand up to poverty by contributing three units.
Acute malnutrition affects 34 million children worldwide and often overlaps with conflict and war. Give one unit for every nutritious meal you will eat today.	More than five years after the earthquake in Haiti, Church World Service still supports agriculture, food security and food production programs for over 5,000 people there. Give one unit per variety of fresh produce in your kitchen.	49 million Americans struggle to put food on the table, and one in five children are at risk of hunger (among African Americans and Latinos, that number is one in three). Give two units if your family had enough to eat today.	"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me..." —Matthew 25: 35a Give a unit to feed the hungry today.	Hunger causes cognitive and physical stunting, and a variety of other health problems. It constrains economic growth and perpetuates poverty. Contribute one unit for every kind of canned food in your pantry, and consider donating a few to a local shelter.	Hunger is the number one cause of death in the world. Consider skipping a meal today and praying for the hungry in our world. Then give three units to feed others.	Your generous gifts given through this special offering will make a difference in the lives of hungry, hurting, and impoverished persons around the world. Give five final units in solidarity and celebration.

Sources: www.SyrianRefugees.eu, [Refugees International \(www.refint.org\)](http://RefugeesInternational.org), Church World Service, International Displacement Monitoring Center, UNICEF, Action Against Hunger, United Church of Christ, Poverty USA, DoSomething.org, OXFAM International, The World Bank.

Sharing Calendar Daily Giving Devotion

Daily Giving Devotion

- At a time appropriate for your household, read the theme scripture for Week of Compassion, 2016: Ruth 1:1-22
- Invite each member of the household to describe one instance of how they have shared with someone else since the last daily giving devotion.
- Read the day's entry in the sharing calendar. Discuss the situation described and its relationship to your household.
- Consider your contribution for the day and add it to your offering box.
- Pray for the people and situations highlighted in the sharing calendar, and for the people you will meet in the coming hours:

Dear God,

Thank you for your love and mercy, your compassion and grace. Thank you for the many blessings you have given to us. [Each member of the household names at least two each day]. We pray that you would show us ways that we might share with others, and walk the extra mile in your name. Give us generous hearts that overflow with gratitude and joy.

Today we pray especially today for [the day's highlighted group]. May our gifts given through Week of Compassion be a blessing to them, and remind us all of the way that you are working in our world and in our lives.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

- Remember to take your offering box to church on the days when the Week of Compassion offering will be received.

**"Where you go I
will go; and where
you stay I will stay."**

RUTH 1:16



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