

# Act Out

Empowering Youth to  
Heal a Hurting World



**A Program for Youth in the Episcopal Church**

## **Clean Water and Sanitation: Camping and VBS Format**

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## Letter from the President

It is a personal privilege to present to you the new Episcopal Relief & Development youth initiative, Act Out: Empowering Youth to Heal a Hurting World.

At Episcopal Relief & Development, we are investing in the future of this world. That task begins with forming the youth of today to be agents of change tomorrow—starting now!

It is my hope that this resource will present an important opportunity for Christian formation, nurturing in young people the practices and

commitments for a lifetime of working for justice. This initiative allows youth leaders in the Episcopal Church to provide instruction and formation within the grand Christian tradition, while also training youth for missional engagement.

The program aims to help youth connect the practices, traditions and resources of the Church with the larger needs in the world. For example:

- \* Reflecting on the nature of the Eucharist might lead to focusing on the Table as a place of encountering God and each other.
- \* Meditating on the essence of Christ as the stranger in our midst may evoke a longing for justice.
- \* Praying about food and water as common physical and spiritual needs could serve as the basis for global connections.
- \* Studying the scriptural texts of the prophets and parables might encourage young people to make their own voices heard.

Thank you for embarking with us on this journey, as the Church seeks to encounter and serve God in our neighbors at home and overseas.

Yours faithfully,

Robert W. Radtke

## Program Overview

Young people within the Episcopal Church bring an energy and agency that is too often overlooked. Episcopal Relief & Development recognizes that youth and young adults are key allies in the Church's call to stand against hunger and poverty. Through Act Out, we are inviting youth to join us as we seek to be agents for global change. The initiative engages participants with the ministries of Episcopal Relief & Development and provides resources to:

- » Explore hopes and needs of the world's people, raising awareness about the realities of hunger, poverty and disease—in particular, waterborne diseases;
- » Equip youth to respond in faith, through scriptural study, liturgical practice and discernment of gifts; and
- » Empower them for prophetic voice and action in local communities and beyond, that they may be the voices of prophets and hands of Christ for healing a hurting world.

This particular camping or Vacation Bible School resource is an outgrowth of the [Clean Water and Sanitation](#) retreat module. It uses the Act Out methodology and it is similarly organized around the movements of the Eucharist: Gather, Word, Confession, Commitment and Going Forth, spreading them out over a five-day period. As you plan your week, you might find it helpful to review the retreat module, as it has additional games and alternative resources.

You might find it useful to utilize this program within the context of the Church missional activities related to: the [Millennium Developmental Goals](#), the [Five Marks of Anglican Mission](#), the Baptismal Covenant, global poverty, or the Beatitudes.



During the time together, youth will consider the needs of the world through storytelling and fact gathering. They will take what they hear and think hard about how they might respond, in word and deed, to bear witness to and participate in God's activity in the world. It is recommended that the worship be a regular activity, culminating in a special celebration of the Eucharist, which might incorporate themes of clean water and sanitation.

Finally, the hope is that participants will learn not only about clean water but also about how they are connected—to one another and to people around the world who experience the lack of clean water as part of their daily lives. There are many community-building activities throughout the event, with the hope that as youth begin to feel more connected to one another, particularly those they don't know well, they will also begin to feel connected to their brothers and sisters worldwide.

# The Global Flow of Fellowship: Clean Water and Sanitation

## Format and Timeline

The timeline and suggestions that follow are suitable for a weeklong camping or Vacation Bible School format, but feel free to adapt to fit your needs. An important part of this program is to find ways to empower youth participants to share their learning with their wider communities. Ideally, this sharing will take many forms—as a part of worship, formation and fellowship.

### Day 1: **Gather**

- Counselor Skit: Exodus 17:1-7
- Small Group Discussion
- Water Games

### Day 2: **Word**

- Welcome Videos
- Counselor Skit: John 2:1-11
- Small Group Discussion
- Water Quiz Show Game
- Bottled Water Video and Discussion
- Water Scavenger Hunt and Discussion

### Day 3: **Confession**

- Remembering Activity
- Baptismal Balloon Toss
- Clean Water Video and Discussion
- Reenactment: John 13:1-10
- Confession
- Renewal of Baptismal Covenant

### Day 4: **Commitment**

- Counselor Skit: John 13:1-10
- Small Group Discussion
- Modern Day Skit
- Getting Your Hands Dirty Brainstorming

### Day 5: **Commitment and Going Forth**

- Getting Your Hands Dirty Brainstorming (continued) and Presentation
- Create a Water Pledge





## Gather [Day 1]

Just as we are a people whose first act of worship is to gather—gathering to hear the Word and around the Table—so too gathering together as a camp community is an act of worship. Find a creative way to focus the campers attention in the Gathering time in a worshipful way, such as with music, prayer or a creative reflective powerpoint with impacting [pictures](#).

As you gather, consider using the following elements:

- » **Reusable water bottles.** Ask everyone to bring a reusable water container to drink out of during the event. In small groups, have each person share the story behind her or his water bottle. (Perhaps it represents a sports team, a school, a summer camp, a family business or an organization. Maybe it's from a camping trip or vacation or was given away at a special event.) Once everyone has shared, read the story "[Building Access to Clean Water](#)." At the end, one of the leaders might facilitate a discussion about how the individuals in the story would have participated in the previous conversation, inviting the youth to wonder about how Juan and Maria's children may have talked about their water bottles.
- » **Expectations.** Have a conversation about expectations for the experience. Encourage the youth to fully engage in the program by limiting the use of cell phones and other electronics. Remind them of any other logistics (bathrooms!) and ground rules particular to your group and/or space. Youth might better enter into the experience by taking on certain spiritual practices or giving up certain privileges. Such practices as sacrificing their cell phones/electronics or limiting use of electricity and water may help bring them into solidarity with people in the developing world.

## Programming

### Counselor Skit

As part of the preparation for the week, work with camp counselors (or Vacation Bible School teachers) to create a skit that recalls or enacts the events of [Exodus 17: 1-7](#), where the Israelites were quarrelling with Moses about the lack of water. Consider doing the skit live, recording it or combining elements of both—but whatever you do, make it humorous. Contextualize the story by bringing out the essential human elements of the narrative. Feel free to expand on the biblical text and make it more “real.” Click here for an example of a skit that reflects the entire Exodus [experience](#).

### Small Group Discussion

After the skit, have the youth participants break into small groups to discuss the following elements of the skit and how they relate to their lives:

Why is water so important to us? How do we use water? Where do you get your water? Have you ever been thirsty like the Israelites? What was that like? Is it testing God to ask for access to clean water?

## Water Games

Using the following games allows the conversation on water to take on a more tangible form.

- 1) **Bucket Relay:** Fill a large bucket with water. Give each person on the team a small Dixie cup. One at a time, they fill the Dixie cup, run to the end of the line and dump it in an empty bucket. First team to fill the empty bucket wins.

- 2) **Water Jug Relay**

You'll need:

- Buckets of water—one per team
- Large sponges—one per team
- Empty one-gallon plastic milk jug—one per team

- » Split players into two or more teams.
- » Set the buckets of water on one side of the race course with the sponges in them. Place the milk jugs at the opposite end of the race course.
- » The object of the game is to be the first team to fill its milk jug with water. The first player of each team soaks the sponge with water, runs to the milk jug and squeezes the water into it. The player then runs back to pass the sponge to the next player. This continues until the first jug is full.
- » To provide more of a challenge, try using turkey baster syringes instead of sponges—you have to aim while you are also trying to win! **TIP:** A little food coloring in the jug will help the racers see how much water is in it.

- 3) **Water Obstacle Course**

You'll need:

- Two large tin cans (#10) or plastic containers, one for each team
- A ruler
- Obstacles for the course, i.e., things to climb over or under or walk through, or anything that can be done with one hand (the other one will be holding the can)

- » Set up the obstacle course.
- » Fill both cans with equal amounts of water (use a ruler to measure the distance of the water from the top of the can).
- » Divide the kids into two teams.
- » Have the first player from each team place a can on top of his or her head.
- » At the word "Go!," the player must negotiate the obstacle course holding the can on her or his head, then return to the start line and pass the can off to the next one in line.
- » The game continues like this until each player has had a chance to run the obstacle course.



» After all the team members have run the course, the team with the most water left in its can wins. If the two teams have the same amount of water, then the team that finished first wins.

### 3) **Create a Water Contraption to Clean Water**

- » Give each small group dirty water and a variety of things that might help them filter their water to make it clean. See what they come up with in the end.
- » Items can include things such as coffee filters, sand, straws, cotton fabric, rocks, etc.

### **Worship Time**

Conclude the day's programming with a brief service.

Consider using a version of the Book of Common Prayer from a different part of the Anglican Communion to structure your service or create a more contemporary liturgy. In either case, please use the following collect as the Prayer of the day:

*O gracious Father, you opened your hand and filled all things living with plenteousness: Bless the lands and waters, and multiply the harvests of the world; let your Spirit go forth, that it may renew the face of the earth; show your loving-kindness, that our land may give her increase; and save us from selfish use of what you give us, that men and women everywhere may give you thanks; through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, page 828)*

## **Word: Water and Us [Day 2]**

This time is set aside to better understand clean water and sanitation and how Episcopal Relief & Development's work is one way in which the Church lives into its baptismal calling to seek and serve Christ in all people. Encourage curiosity and imagination. Let the youth figure things out, and challenge the adult leaders (yourself included!) to observe and listen.

**Welcome Videos.** Welcome the youth into the event with the two welcome videos from [Rob Radtke](#), President of Episcopal Relief & Development, and [Katharine Jefferts Schori](#), Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Consider asking your bishop to record a similar video welcome.

### **Counselor Skit**

As part of the preparation for the week, work with camp counselors (or Vacation Bible School teachers) to create a skit that recalls or enacts the events of [John 2:1-11](#), where Jesus turns water into wine at the Wedding at Cana. Consider doing the skit live, recording it or combining elements of both—but whatever you do, make it humorous. Contextualize the story by bring out the essential human elements of the narrative. Feel free to expand on the biblical text and make it more “real.”





### Small Group Discussion

After the skit, have the youth participants break into small groups to discuss the following elements of the skit and how they relate to their lives:

Jesus turned water into wine, which is also a way of making it safe to drink. What do you think a modern-day version of this story would be? What would Jesus do to make the water safe to drink?

### Clean Water Quiz Show

- » Download the [quiz](#).
- » Divide the group into two teams.
- » Have the groups pick names for their teams for the quiz show.
- » Read the questions and ask the teams to talk among themselves and then write down the team answer.
- » Have the teams share the answers, reveal the right answer, award points for each right answer, and then read the expanded answer.
- » Have fun encouraging the teams You might make a big scorecard on a chalkboard or whiteboard and ask others to read off the possible answers.
- » Keep in mind that the goal is not for one team to win, but for everyone to become more aware of water issues!

### Bottled Water Video

Watch the video [The Story of Bottled Water](#), and facilitate a conversation about the group's reactions and our use of water in the U.S. Ask open-ended questions such as:

- » What did you find most surprising?
- » What was most disturbing?
- » Where did you see glimmers of hope?
- » What can we do to make a difference in our communities?



## Water Scavenger Hunt

The leader introduces the next activity with these or similar words: “Thinking about where we get water, how we use water and how we consume water, we’re going to take some time this morning to find our water sources. Your objective this morning is to figure out where our water comes from and how we use it.”

- » Divide the group into several teams.
- » Give each team a cheap digital camera to take pictures of the water they see and discover on their journey; several empty containers, which should be big enough so they can feel the weight of the water they are to carry; and a marking pen.
- » Send the teams on a scavenger hunt around the camp facility to find the places where water is available. At each location, they will collect a small amount of water in one of the containers and label it with the source (e.g., “lake” or “bathroom”). The teams will then bring all their water samples back to the large group gathering.
- » Once you gather back together, ask the teams where they got their water and what the water from each place looks and smells like: lake, pool, kitchen, bathroom, water fountain, puddles, etc.
- » Once all teams have had an opportunity to share, have them pour the water from the same sources together in clear containers (i.e., all samples from the lake go in one container, etc.) Put those containers on your water table; you will come back to them later in the week.
- » Questions: Which water would you want to drink? Which would you want to bathe in? Which water would be okay to swim in? How far do you think you had to walk to gather all this water? What surprised you on your water scavenger hunt?

## Worship Time

Conclude the day’s program with a brief service. Consider using a version of the Book of Common Prayer from a different part of the Anglican Communion to structure your service or create a more contemporary liturgy. In either case, please use the following collect as the Prayer of the day:

*We thank you, Almighty God, for the gift of water. Over it the Holy Spirit moved in the beginning of creation. Through it you led the children of Israel out of their bondage in Egypt into the land of promise. In it your Son Jesus received the baptism of John and was anointed by the Holy Spirit as the Messiah, the Christ, to lead us, through his death and resurrection, from the bondage of sin into everlasting life. Bless this water that we have collected and help us to be mindful of the needs of others throughout the world. (Adapted from the Service of Holy Baptism, BCP, page 306)*

## Confession: What’s Our Role [Day 3]

The focus of this time is acknowledge our own fallenness or “creatureliness” and to confront our own complicity in, and life-denying apathy toward, the situation of those who lack access to clean water. Youth learn to develop a prophetic voice by first paying attention to their complicity and seeking absolution.

## Remembering (5 minutes)

Questions: Who can help me remember what we did yesterday when we gathered to do our program? What did we learn from that? What do you remember? Have you thought about it since then?

## Baptismal Balloon Toss

Gather the youth into a circle (or multiple circles, if the group is large enough). Place in the middle of the circle five filled water balloons—each displaying one of the vows from the Baptismal Covenant (Book of Common Prayer, 304-5). Use a magic marker to write the vows on each balloon. Take a moment to review them all and then explain the rules of the game.

- » Each balloon will be tossed around the circle. Start with one balloon and add additional balloons after a few minutes to make it more challenging.
  - » The goal of the activity is to ensure that the vows on each balloon are not broken.
  - » When a vow/balloon is broken, the game is paused and the two persons involved in the balloon breaking must each name one way in which the broken vow can be applied in his or her life.
- » The game continues until all of the vows/ balloons are broken and the youth have stated how each will be applied in their lives.



## Clean Water Video

Going deeper into our exploration, watch this [video](#) featuring Episcopal Relief & Development's program partner in Nicaragua, El Porvenir. Once the video is finished, ask the youth to reflect on how this video is different from the first one. Again, ask open-ended questions like those above.

- » Where did you see glimmers of hope?
  - » What can we do to make a difference in our communities?
- » What did you find most surprising?
  - » What was most disturbing?

## Go With The Flow (45 minutes)

Download the instructions and materials for this [activity](#) and conduct it with the youth.

## Scriptural Reenactment

Lead the group in reenacting Jesus' primary act of service to his disciples, which we commemorate on Maundy Thursday. Have basins and towels on display in a prominent place. Read [John 13:1-10](#) and explain that counselors/teachers will wash the feet of the youth. Once the washing is over and everyone is seated, allow for a time of silent reflection as you ask the following questions:

Jesus washed his disciples' feet to show that he was their servant and to make them clean. If Jesus were to bend down to wash your feet, what wrongs would he be washing away? What would it feel like to have Jesus serving you?

## Confession (15 minutes)

The Go With The Flow activity demonstrates how we directly and indirectly soil and foul our water. Take a few minutes to think about confession in the context of access to clean water. What might we confess? What evils have we done? What goods have been left undone? Share thoughts with each other and see where the conversation goes. As we make our confession, God grants us absolution. In the clean water demonstration, this absolution is manifested by the water being made clean. In what ways does the experience of being forgiven free us up to use our God-given ingenuity to make the world a better place?

Close with the General Confession from *Enriching Our Worship*<sup>1</sup> or by writing a group statement of confession. Like the water made clean, we seek God's absolution to be made right with our sisters and brothers around the globe.

## Worship Time

Conclude the day's program with a brief worship service. Consider leading the youth in a renewal of their baptismal vows by using the service for Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer, starting with baptismal covenant and concluding with the "Thanksgiving over the Water." If a priest is available, have him or her bless the water that was collected the previous day and use it for aspersions.

If there are youth present who are not yet baptized, follow the example of the Ethiopian eunuch, who asked "What prevents me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36) and consider doing the service as a baptism (if a priest is available).

## Commitment: What Can We Do Differently [Day 4]

On the fourth day, it is now the time to ponder what we can begin to do differently and consider how we can make an impact in our community and in the world. How can we demonstrate our prophetic calling to be God's hands and feet in this hurting world?

## Counselor Skit

As part of the preparation for the week, work with camp counselors (or Vacation Bible School teachers) to create a skit that recalls or enacts the events of [John 4:1-15](#), where Jesus offers living

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<sup>1</sup> *Enriching Our Worship*, New York: Church Publishing (1998), 56.

water to the woman at the well. Consider doing the skit live, recording it or combining elements of both—but whatever you do, make it humorous. Contextualize the story by bring out the essential human elements of the narrative. Feel free to expand on the biblical text and make it more “real.”

### **Small Group Discussion**

After the skit, have the youth participants break into small groups to discuss the following elements of the skit and how they relate to their lives.

- » Summarize the story—what’s going on here?
- » Think about the water gathering you have done this week during the Walk to Water and the Well Water activity. Then think about the Samaritan woman coming to the well to draw water. How might your experiences and the story of the Samaritan woman in this Bible passage relate?
- » Considering the topic at hand, what do you think about when Jesus says, “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst”?
- » When Jesus refers to “living water,” what does that mean to you?
- » How are needs for physical water related to Jesus’ concerns about spiritual water?
- » What might this story have to say about who we are called to be and do?

### **Modern-Day Skit**

Have each small group create a skit about the John 4:1-15 passage. They can create a rap, skit, song or poem, but it should reflect a modern-day view of water and the living waters of Christ. Allow 20 minutes of planning time and 10 minutes for groups to perform their skits.

### **Getting Your Hands Dirty (2+ hours)**

The youth will use this time of commitment to think about how they, as a group or as individuals, can use what they’ve learned to make a difference in the world. Return to the room that has the items from the scavenger hunt and have the group brainstorm ideas to share the news with the church community and beyond. Be creative! Possible ideas:

- » Write the Prayers of the People for use in worship on the last day of camp.
- » Prepare a sermon, skit or reflection to offer during the sermon time.
- » Decorate the worship space! Create a picture of a well, or perhaps get an inflatable pool and designate it as a Wishing Well. Use the well as a place where parishioners can pray for those lacking access to clean water, make a financial contribution and make wishes for the better of others.
- » Prepare an information sheet to explain the presence of the clean water and share it with those at worship service, and even with people on your newsletter list.
- » Write, address, stamp and mail a letter from the youth to the parish about their experience.



- » Find out about your local water supply and its quality. Consider a visit to the local water purification or sanitation plant. Start your research [here](#).
- » Complete a personal water [audit](#).
- » Make a video about what you have learned.

*What can you do when you go home?*

- » Come up with a date to fundraise to support those without safe water worldwide. Be creative. Plan an open mike night, sell crafts or host an alternative gift fair. Begin to plan all the details and assign tasks for each component.
- » Prepare a class, Bible study or presentation. Use it to teach the adult formation class that Sunday morning.
- » Do a more public, multigenerational [Water Walk](#) to raise awareness and funds to support clean water.
- » Encourage a group of adults in your parish to hold a “[Wedding at Cana](#)” or “[Wine into Water](#)” wine-tasting event and raise money to support clean water programs.
- » Create a toilet seat petition. Read the [story](#) of one British student and her petition or watch her [video](#). Buy a toilet seat at a local hardware store and collect signatures, raise awareness and advocate on clean water issues with an elected governmental official.
- » With the permission of the parish leadership, stage a toilet papering event of the church. Pick a two-day window and gather interested youth. Host an event to create a social witness to the needs of clean water and sanitation: create signs, arrange a speaker, invite the community and then “TP” the church. Leave the paper up for 24 hours as a witness and have a clean-up crew ready to assist afterward.
- » Whatever else you can think of!

Once you have brainstormed, put the ideas into action! The time needed for this segment will vary, depending on what the youth choose to do. If they have enough time, do another project!

## **Worship Time**

Conclude the day’s programming with a brief prayer service. Connect the Commitment to the Gospel story with a brief discussion about why you are taking these actions. Conclude with an appropriate prayer that offers your service to God and invites the Holy Spirit to act in and through your commitments. Consider using a version of the Book of Common Prayer from a different part of the Anglican Communion to structure your service or create a more contemporary liturgy. In either case, please use the following collect as the Prayer of the day:

*O God, heavenly Father, who by your Son Jesus Christ has promised to all those who seek your kingdom and its righteousness all things necessary to sustain their life: Send us, we entreat thee, in this time of need, such moderate rain and showers, that we may receive the fruits of the earth, to our comfort and to your honor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Book of Common Prayer, page 828)*

## Commitment (continued) [Day 5]

### Getting Your Hands Dirty (2+ hours)

Have the groups present their ideas so far, and think about where they still want to go and what they want to do. The youth will continue working on their projects or brainstorming ideas.

### Small Group Discussion

In small groups, appoint one youth to read [Jeremiah 1:1-10](#) and have the group reflect on the passage.

Questions: Summarize the story—what’s going on here? What does God ask Jeremiah to do? What does God promise Jeremiah? What does this passage say about the nature of prophetic calling? Take a few moments and reflect on how these commitment ideas are prophetic. In what way is God calling you to be a prophet? What has God promised each of you?

### Create a Water Pledge

Put up a large sheet of paper with the words, “My Water Pledge.” Have participants write or draw on sheets of paper what they pledge to do once they go home, sign them and hang them under the sign. Consider having additional paper to write personal pledges to take home.

### Plan the Concluding Eucharist Together

Using the work done in the “Getting Your Hands Dirty” time as a foundation, plan a Eucharistic service with all participants. It is suggested that you use “An Order for Celebrating the Holy Eucharist” or so-called Rite III, as it allows for more flexibility (Book of Common Prayer, 400-405). Decide which scriptures to use. You may use one of the passages from the week or choose another one that focuses on water and taking care of God’s creation (see below). Decide who will “preach,” offer a skit, etc. during the homily time. Use the special water-themed Prayers of the People composed earlier.

Consider how to incorporate the holy water collected earlier in the week into an interactive prayer station (see below). Write your own Eucharistic prayer or proper preface. Find a way to commission the campers into their prophetic calling. Be creative in your planning and empower the youth to fashion the service—liturgy is the work of the people. Below are some suggestions.

### Worship Ideas

- + Create a visually symbolic “water table” to serve as a font/table or interactive prayer station.

Include some of these visual elements:

- |                                       |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| -- Water bottles (a variety of kinds) | -- Clear container with clean water  |
| -- Clear container with dirty water   | -- Buckets                           |
| -- Toilet seat                        | -- Brita pitcher                     |
| -- Chlorine tablets                   | -- Floating candles                  |
| -- Water fountain                     | -- Baptismal font/bowl with seashell |

- + Incorporate artistic prayer stations with the following materials for creating responses:

- |                        |                |                           |
|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| - Paper                | - Markers      | - Crayons                 |
| - Colored tissue paper | - Glue         | - Scissors                |
| - Magazines            | - Poster board | - Watercolors and brushes |
|                        | - Computer     | - Printer                 |

**+ Scripture Suggestions:**

- Exodus 17:1-7
- Mark 1:4-13
- Isaiah 41: 17-20
- Psalm 107: 33-43
- Matthew 5: 1-12
- John 4:1-15
- Titus 3:1-11
- Matthew 10:34-42

**+ Musical Suggestions\*:**

- Wade in the Water (WLP #740)
- When like the Woman (VF #24)
- Cuando el pobre (WLP #802)
- I've Got Peace like a River (LEVAS #201)
- Healing River of the Spirit (VF #96)
- Waters Crashing at Creation (MSHO #67)
- You Shall Cross Barren Deserts (WLP #811)
- We Shall Gather at the River (LEVAS #141)
- Shall We Gather at the River Colors
- Soplo de Dios Vivente (MHSO #107)

## Going Forth: Serve God [Day 5]

The week of programming culminates in this closing Eucharist. Through the week, the flow of programming has employed the liturgical structure of the Eucharist, starting with the initial Gathering, learning in the Word time, reflecting in the Confession segment, pledging in the Commitment time, and finally commencing in prophetic activity in Going Forth. With the Eucharist, send the youth out to love and serve the Lord.

## Appendix

### General Clean Water Resources and Fast Facts Page

- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/CleanWaterFacts.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/CleanWaterFacts.pdf)
- + [www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/factsheet.html](http://www.un.org/waterforlifedecade/factsheet.html)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/WaterQuiz.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/WaterQuiz.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/Burundi.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/Burundi.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/Myanmar.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/Myanmar.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/China.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/China.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/stories/programs/RestoringWater/](http://www.er-d.org/stories/programs/RestoringWater/)

### Activities

- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/WaterWalkSolidarity.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/WaterWalkSolidarity.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/RacetoDevelopment.pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/RacetoDevelopment.pdf)
- + [www.er-d.org/userfiles/GoWithTheFlow\(1\).pdf](http://www.er-d.org/userfiles/GoWithTheFlow(1).pdf)

### Make a Difference: Gifts for Life

- + <http://www.er-d.org/GiftsForLife/4/95/>
- + <http://www.er-d.org/GiftsForLife/4/94/>

\* LEVAS: *Lift Every Voice and Sing II* (Church Publishing, New York, NY, 1993)

MHSO: *My Heart Sings Out* (Church Publishing, New York, NY, 2004)

VF: *Voices Found* (Church Publishing, New York, NY, 2003)

WLP: *Wonder, Love and Praise* (Church Publishing, New York, NY, 1997)

## In Search of Partnership: Beyond the Charity Spectrum

*“Go with the people. Live with them. Learn from them. Love them. Start with what they have. Build on what they know. But with the best leaders, when the work is done, the task accomplished, the people will say, ‘We have done this ourselves.’”*

— Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher

In constant search of partnership—with implementing communities and donors alike—Episcopal Relief & Development works to embody God’s reconciliation and healing as established in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. As a Church, we affirm in our baptismal vows a commitment to strive for justice and peace among all people, and to “respect the dignity of every human being.” Episcopal Relief & Development seeks to do just that as it works to alleviate human suffering.

Echoing the philosophy of economist Amartya Sen, who writes about [\*Development as Freedom\*](#), the methodology of Episcopal Relief & Development is calculated to accentuate the dignity and agency of each person with whom we partner. By removing “major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systemic deprivation,” Episcopal Relief & Development empowers individuals and communities to seek the abundant life that Jesus promised.

Rather than impose “one size fits all” solutions, Episcopal Relief & Development supports local, long-term initiatives that address poverty, hunger, disease, economic development and disaster response where the need is greatest. Our partnership with the worldwide Church creates opportunities to serve communities in some of the most remote areas of the world, as well as in urban environments where extreme poverty persists.

This methodology presents a complete shift and reframing of the relief and development conversation. At its beginning, international aid was driven by a charitable impulse to “help the needy.” While well-meaning, this model did not fully appreciate the complexity of the power relationships or the dependency that result.

And although now international development agencies like Episcopal Relief & Development use concepts of participation, empowerment, accountability and human rights as the foundation for programming, many people in the Church still operate under a charity model. To support this increased understanding and different approach, Episcopal Relief & Development recommends using different language to frame discussions.

### Words to Live By

Take a moment to think about your parish, community or neighborhood. How would you describe it? How would you want someone from outside your community to describe it? How would you want that person to characterize your strengths? Your weaknesses?



Respecting the dignity of every human being requires open attitudes, sensitive minds and the willingness to meet others on their own terms. The manner in which we use language articulates our beliefs and attitudes.

***Avoid language that:***

- » Defines individuals and communities solely by their poverty and lack
- » Places individuals and communities on any lesser terms than the speaker
- » Praises either the role of the sufferer or of the donor

***Utilize language that:***

- » Stresses our partnership and oneness in Christ
- » Focuses on our corporate participation in the sinful blockages that center on systemic and underlying causes of human suffering
- » Underscores the ability, giftedness and capacity of all humans while stressing the notion of responsibility: “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required” (Luke 12:48, NRSV)



**Good examples:**

“This youth program will help bring you into contact with the impediments and blockages that many experience in developing nations in Africa.”

“Humans tend to undervalue the opportunities that they have and look for more. Young people across the globe do not sufficiently consider the opportunity that Christ presents to us to remake the very notion of what constitutes ‘opportunity,’ by embodying the ideal of sharing and community.”