

# SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY AND SERMON STARTER

## IT'S TIME TO SHARE...

*"Carpe diem!"* wrote the famous Roman poet Horace. Often translated "seize the day," the phrase is used to urge action now, without concern for the future: life is short, act now; swallow that fear and "go for it;" stop wasting time and have that adventure; don't squander time and energy on the small stuff; grab the gusto; be all you can be; take the trip; buy the shoes; eat the chocolate cake. Time is of the essence—do it now!

When Horace used the phrase in his *Odes*, he probably meant to spur people to see that there are experiences that enrich our lives that we might miss if we're not paying attention. Latin scholar Maria S. Marsilio reminds us that root meaning of the verb **carpe** carries the agricultural sense of "picking: or "plucking," evoking the plucking and gathering of ripening fruits or flowers, enjoying a moment that is rooted in the sensory experience of nature."<sup>2</sup>

Paul also speaks of reaping, sowing, and harvesting as he writes to the Galatian churches. But his focus is less on enjoying the moment than on using every opportunity to extend hospitality and generosity to the community. Paul envisions church communities of men and women from every walk of life, embraced as siblings and cared for as if each were caring for themselves. The love and care they receive from God should make them channels of God's love and care for others by doing the works of Jesus—feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger, and working for justice.

Paul sees that the love of God in Christ will ultimately produce a mighty harvest of shalom, of well-being. The final word on God's creation will not be hunger, but abundance. At the moment, though, we live in a world in which hunger is widespread and can be brought on by disasters, poverty, or fleeing conflict. Food sustains life. Responding to hunger is an affirmation of life. One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) is responding to hunger issues, no matter the cause, both locally and globally.

The OGHS offering supports partnerships and programs that creatively promote food security. As you prepare to preach and encourage giving to the OGHS, consider these questions:

- Is there a sense of urgency in your congregation to respond to sisters and brothers in need?
- For whom is food insecurity an issue in your congregation and your community?
- What signs of life and hope are visible in the way your congregation and community are already responding to the needs of those who are hungry?
- How does your congregation advocate for those who experience food insecurity?
- What are some positive stories you can share about your congregation's and community's work to alleviate hunger?
- How can volunteers stay motivated as the need for food security increases?

In Galatians 6, Paul urges the churches to act "every time we get the chance." The word translated "time" is the Greek *kairos*. *Kairos* is not simply chronological time; it is a decisive and appointed moment and season to do God's work. Whenever we have an opportunity, we can work together—for the good of all, one community at a time, planting seeds of faith, hope, and love to feed a hungry world.

Now is the time to *carpe diem*—not for our own pleasure, but to contribute to the bountiful harvest God desires all to enjoy together. Let us do what we can, while we can, with all that we have. Seize, pluck, harvest the day. It's time to share so that no one goes hungry. There is enough for all when we share. The time to share is now.

*Carpe diem*, indeed, and in deed!

<sup>2</sup> Chi Luu, "How 'Carpe Diem' Got Lost in Translation," August 7, 2019, <https://daily.jstor.org/how-carpe-diem-got-lost-in-translation/>

# CHILDREN'S MOMENT

[This is based on the story of Esmerelda, found here: <https://cwsglobal.org/stories/esmerelda/>.]

*Constructed to be used in your own words, or to be followed as a script, this children's moment illustrates some of the ways that doing good and sharing with others is a communal activity. The script and design may be adjusted to fit your virtual or hybrid worship context.*

## Theme

One Great Hour of Sharing reminds us that it "is time to share" by giving to others in small ways that make a big difference – even ones we cannot see ourselves. There are many ways for us to know God's generosity in our lives and to share that with others. Sometimes, we just need to think about them in new ways.

## Materials Needed

- An affirming listening ear, eager to engage children's ideas!
- Pictures of Esmerelda and her farm (<https://cwsglobal.org/stories/esmerelda/>)
- OGHS Coin Boxes if you want them to take up an offering.

## Game

During this children's moment, you will play the classic game "Telephone." Here are the simple instructions:

1. **Getting Started.** Players sit in a circle or stand in a straight line. They need to be close enough that whispering is possible, but not so close that players can hear each other whisper.
2. **Begin the Game.** The first person in the line or circle whispers a word or phrase into the ear of the person sitting or standing to their right.
3. **The Game Continues.** Players whisper the phrase to their neighbors until it reaches the last player in line.
4. **The Conclusion.** The last player says the word or phrase out loud so everyone can hear how much it has changed from the first whisper at the beginning of the circle or line.<sup>3</sup>

If a player doesn't understand the phrase, he/she/they cannot ask for it to be repeated. That's a very important part of the game!

<sup>3</sup> <https://icebreakerideas.com/telephone-game/>.

## Script Suggestion

I want to ask you a very serious question: Are you good at sharing with others?

### **Give time for responses.**

Sometimes when I was your age, I found it hard to share. But as I got older, it seemed to get a little easier.

This morning, we are going to play a game in which you share something with another person. Are you ready?

*Set up and explain the game of "Telephone" as described above. Suggested phrases for them to whisper include:*

- *Sharing is caring.*
- *Do you want to share a pig?*
- *Share a story with me.*
- *Or any version that includes the phrase "sharing."*

**Play the game and then ask the last person to say it out loud for all to hear ... and you, as the leader, can affirm or correct it.**

In one of the books of the Bible, a man by the name of Paul, we sometimes call him "Apostle Paul," wrote some ideas about sharing with others.

To the church at Galatia, he reminded them of this: "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people" and "let us not become weary of doing good." Those are big words, aren't they?

What do you think he meant?

### **Give time for responses.**

That's right – he meant that we should always be looking for ways to share with others.

Well, let me tell you a story about a lady named Esmerelda. She lives in a country called Honduras. And through some people like members of this church sharing a gift with her, she can pass that on. Want to know how she does it?

You ready to hear? It's really neat!

Through an activity called "pass chain," Esmerelda receives foster animals – maybe a pregnant pig, sheep or cow. She feeds and cares for them. When the next piglet, lamb or calf is born, it is passed on to another family, which in turn will do the same. Today, Esmerelda has a pregnant pig, three sheep and 30 chickens.

*Continued on next page*

How cool is that? Remember how you passed along that phrase earlier. Imagine if you were passing along an animal after it was born to another family. That is a really great way to do good and it provides an income for the families that participate. You think your parents would let you do this at your house?

Do you want to see some pictures of Esmeralda?

**Show the picture.**

Did you ever think you could do good by raising an animal and passing it on! Well, you can by giving an offering to One Great Hour of Sharing.

You have a chance to share with others through an offering you can collect over the next week [or two].

*(If using coin boxes)* Here is a special bank so you can help others by doing good and sharing with them. At home, I'd like you to think about all the times each day someone shares something with you. Maybe it's at school or when you are playing with your siblings. And with your family, maybe each night at dinner, or when you have breakfast, think and pray together about how you want to make a difference. Maybe you want to put in a dollar for every time someone shares something with you, either at home or at school.

Or maybe you want to count all the times you've shared something with another person and add an

amount of money for every time. I bet you can think of a lot of creative ways to help. It's a way of being mindful of all that we have, being grateful, and helping others.

**Share any details about when your congregation will be receiving the offering, and when and how they should return the coinboxes.**

Can we pray a blessing together on these banks and on the offering we'll receive with them? What do we hope God will do?

**Allow for all their prayer requests. All prayers are welcome!**

Very good! Let's pray:

**If you are comfortable doing so, incorporate the specific requests and wording offered by the children in your prayer with them. And/or you may wish to use this prayer:**

Dear Lord, thank you for loving us so much and showing us how we can love others. We know the offerings we will put in these boxes will change someone's life. We can love those we will never even meet. Sharing really is caring. With thankful hearts, we pray. Amen.



# ORDER OF WORSHIP

## Call to Worship

One: It's time to share ...

**All: with those we know.**

One: It's time to share ...

**All: with those we may never know.**

One: It's time to share...

**All: when it seems easy ...**

One: And when it seems a more difficult task.

**All: It's time to share!**

One: Let us not grow weary.

**All: For the time has come for us to share!**

## Prayer of Invocation

God of abundant life, we come to worship this day from various walks of life and places of engagement, yet we are drawn together through the connection in this community of faith. We pray that during this time, we would be reminded yet again of the power of doing good and of changing the lives of others. It can be so easy to get caught up in our own lives that we forget the simple acts of kindness which can make a world of difference. We want to seize the day and not miss any opportunities. Show us the paths where we might follow in the footsteps of your Son, Jesus, in whose name we pray. Amen.

## Litany of Responsive Reading<sup>4</sup>

One: "Let us not grow weary in doing right,"

**All: but sometimes we are tired.**

One: "We will reap at harvest time,"

**All: but we do not always see the harvest that is in front of us.**

One: "We do not give up,"

**All: but there are times when we want to quit.**

One: "Whenever we have an opportunity,"

**All: we can work together.**

One: "Let us work for the good of all,"

**All: side by side.**

One: One community at a time.

**All: All over the world.**

One: Planting the seeds of faith, hope and love to feed a hungry world.

**All: It's time to share.**

One: No one has to go hungry.

**All: There is enough for all when all share.**

<sup>4</sup> This litany is based on Galatians 6:9-10, NRSV



### Invitation to the Offering

There is in every human heart  
Some not completely barren part,  
Where seeds of truth and love might grow,  
And flowers of generous virtue flow;  
To plant, to watch, to water there,  
This be our duty, be our care.

This poem, by John Bowring, reminds us that generosity flows out of our own hearts, where seeds of truth and love have been planted. Today, through your special offering to One Great Hour of Sharing, you plant generous seeds in places near and far.

Your gifts help organizations confront food insecurity. Your gifts allow women to plant crops, produce fertilizers, and receive the physical seeds they need for planting. Your gifts allow other women to learn practices of irrigation and sustainable farming techniques. Your gifts help support food pantries and soup kitchens and much more.

Through our generous tithes, offerings and special gifts, we proclaim boldly that it's time to share. In that spirit, let us share now!

### Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, we offer these gifts in the spirit of gratitude and with an open heart. These offerings are one way of showing our commitment to sharing with those who are in need, neighbors near and far. Let us not grow weary in giving our gifts to others. Bless them, just as you have us, with an extra measure of your grace. In Christ's name, Amen.

### Charge & Benediction

One: Carpe diem!

**All: Seize the day!**

One: It's time to share.

**All: As we enter the mission field, we are ready to share our gifts with others.**

One: Let us not grow weary nor give up,

**All: For this is the opportune time to start right here, right now. It's time to share!**



So let's  
not allow  
ourselves to  
get fatigued  
doing good.  
At the right  
time we will  
harvest a  
good crop  
if we don't  
give up...

— Galatians 6:9

# WORSHIP RESOURCES

## FOR ANY SEASON AND FOR ANY REASON

Whether you are looking for a call to worship, a pastoral prayer, or an offering invitation, we want to help make One Great Hour of Sharing a meaningful part of your church's worship service. Maybe you are lifting up a special concern for those affected by a recent disaster, or maybe you just want to celebrate this ministry of the church that reaches so many parts of the globe. Here are some of the ways that pastors and worship leaders might incorporate One Great Hour of Sharing into the liturgy, in any season and for any reason.

### Call to Worship

**Leader:** Let us give thanks to God for every good gift; let us give thanks to God for people of courage who help to give hope wherever there is need.

**People:** Today we especially pray for the people in the path of [*Hurricane Michael*] – those who have lost their lives or their loved ones, those whose livelihoods and homes have been battered by the fury of wind and sea and storm.

**Leader:** Be with them all, O God, with your tender mercies and abiding hope.

**People:** We pray for those first responders who indeed offer hope in tangible form – firefighters and paramedics, police officers and soldiers, doctors and nurses, pastors and so many others who brave danger and are a source of comfort and strength.

**Leader:** Our prayers will not cease when the storm passes, nor will our gifts. We are grateful for One Great Hour of Sharing and its partners who are assisting so many who will be there when the cameras are gone.

**People:** Thanks be to God for people who are generous with their time, their talents, their prayers, and their gifts, for they are surely a sign of God's good reign. Amen.



Continued from previous page

## Pastoral Prayer

### After the storm:

Loving Creator,

We know that you are with us in every time and place. In all things, you are faithful. But when winds are raging, we may find it hard to hear your voice. When skies are dark, we may struggle to see your face. When all around is chaos, fear and destruction, the peace you promise seems worlds away.

And yet we continue to seek you in the storm. And we seek you in the morning after. Surround us with the certainty of your loving presence.

To those in raging winds, speak words of calm and comfort. For those in great darkness, send light. For those surrounded by the remains of what was, answer the silence with promises of all that might be.

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Renew our strength for the days ahead. May we hear again your call to be the Church, to speak comfort to those who weep, and to be present with those who suffer. We trust that you have given us every gift we need to meet the needs of this time. Teach us to walk in the way of Christ – sharing all that we have and believing in your goodness in all things. Send us in your peace, Holy One. And may there be joy in the morning. Amen.

## Offering Invitation

Hurricanes and natural disasters bring out some of the best in people. Folks of every race, of every religion or no religion, of every class, step forth to help those who are hurting; whose lives are in shambles; who may wonder if anyone cares about them in the midst of so much suffering. They need not wonder, for folks with trucks and boats have helped carry people to safety, have helped get desperately sick people to hospitals, have tried to make sure that families stay together and have a safe place to recover. Know this: we too are those people. We may not drive a truck or pilot a boat, but we too can help our neighbors in dire need. While we may want to join our hands to those *[in the affected area]* now is not yet the time. We are ready to help when our presence is needed. But in the meantime, we can pray. And we can give. Every dollar given for disaster relief to One Great Hour of Sharing—our wider church family's disaster relief ministry— will go to work through our partners to assist those impacted by this terrible *[description of the situation]*. Long after the headlines have faded and the cameras have been turned off, One Great Hour of Sharing and its partners will still be there helping with long-term recovery. Please give generously, knowing that your gifts will help both now and in the months and years to come.

