

BETHE LIGHT

One Great
HOUR
OF SHARING



abc-oghs.org

2025 OFFERING
Planning and
Resource Guide

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CONTENTS

1	Be the Light A Letter from Your World Relief Officer
3	Guide to Your Promotional Materials
4	Promotion Checklist
6	Bulletin Insert Mission Stories
8	Meet Your World Relief Committee
9	Where Your Gifts Made a Difference in 2024
12	2024 One Great Hour of Sharing Financial Report
13	Did You Know?
14	Theme Development and Scriptural Exegesis: Be the Light
16	Scripture Commentary and Sermon Starter
17	Children's Moment
18	Offering Reminder
19	Order of Worship
19	Call to Worship
19	Prayer of Invocation
19	Litany of Responsive Reading
20	Invitation to the Offering
20	Prayer of Dedication
20	Charge & Benediction
21	Children's Activity: Shine Brightly!
23	Youth Activity: Find the Light
24	Intergenerational Activity: The Light Shines Through
27	Worship Resources for Any Season and for Any Reason
27	Call to Worship
28	Pastoral Prayer
28	Offering Invitation

BE THE LIGHT

A LETTER FROM YOUR WORLD RELIEF OFFICER

Dear American Baptist Leaders,

I love Eugene Peterson's paraphrase of these verses in Matthew 5, and the clear commission they give to show up brightly in the world and be generous with our lives. That is the invitation extended in this year's One Great Hour of Sharing theme, Be the Light.

The scriptures tell us that huge crowds were gathering, drawn to Jesus by his teachings and the miracles of healing he performed. So, Jesus climbed a hill and delivered his "sermon on the mount." He opened his message by bestowing beautiful blessings that must have been like balm for those hearing it, and then he described a life of discipleship. He commands us in those verses to be light-bearers, to raise that light high and cast it wide.

Our giving to One Great Hour of Sharing is one way we can heed that call. When we participate in One Great Hour of Sharing, we shed light in places where circumstances make it difficult to imagine a future with hope. We create possibility for people forced to flee their homes in search of safety and new promise. We support life-giving recovery efforts when disasters devastate communities and overturn lives. We empower partners around the globe in their labors to build sustainable futures. We plant seeds of peace where war has wrought despair and destruction.

I think of the ministries our One Great Hour of Sharing gifts enable as a showering of unexpected blessings, much like those blessings Jesus granted in his sermon on the mount. Our offerings let people know that they are not alone, that people they don't even know see their pain and care enough to respond. They extend a mighty witness of love that is powerful and healing.

I hope you will participate in the One Great Hour of Sharing offering this year with a spirit of joyful generosity! Thank you for 'bringing out the God-colors in the world' by generously sharing your OGHS gifts. This is why we are here: to be shining witnesses of uncommon love and enduring hope, to share abundant blessings with others.

"Here's another way to put it: you're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives."

(Matthew 5:14-16, The Message)



In grateful partnership,



Lisa Rothenberger-Winter
World Relief Officer





GUIDE TO YOUR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Your box of resources includes the following items.

If you need additional quantities, call Lara McQue at 610-768-2011 or email Lmcque@internationalministries.org



Printed Bulletin Insert

Use this fold-over bulletin insert as an educational resource in worship, in your newsletter, and at meals and meetings.

Offering Envelopes (available in English & Spanish)

Distribute envelopes generously. Include them in a letter from your pastor to all members and friends, in pews and Sunday bulletins. Put envelopes in several places to make it easy for people to give when it is most convenient.

2025 Planning and Resource Guide

Inside you will find great content to help you promote the offering. Each page is perforated to be removed and distributed to those who can help build enthusiasm for the offering—the pastor, worship team, teachers, etc.

Video

The 2025 video is “Be the Light.” This video features Orfelina Portillo, an agricultural technician working with families in Honduras. Orfelina has been light for communities in the Santa Barbara region of Honduras for 16 years—sharing her skills at addressing food security with over 750 families. Through your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, Orfelina is empowered to be the light in her community. Runtime is 1:37 and the video can be found at www.abc-oghs.org.

One Great Hour of Sharing Poster (available in English and Spanish)

Create a prominent display with the poster. Call attention to the poster each week through announcements in worship and Sunday school hours and in newsletters.



PROMOTION CHECKLIST

Thanks for saying “Yes!” to coordinating the One Great Hour of Sharing offering for your congregation.

Here are some tips that we hope are helpful to you.

PREPARE! (During April)

Review all promotion resources; order additional quantities if needed by calling Lara McQue at 610-768-2011 or emailing Lmcque@internationalministries.org.

- ☐ Involve others! Share the individual resources found in the 2025 Planning and Resource Guide with the pastor, the worship team, teachers, etc. as appropriate.
- ☐ Choose a leadership team if you need one.
- ☐ With your leadership team, set a realistic, but challenging, offering goal. Challenge your congregation to reflect on Matthew 5:14-16.
- ☐ Set a date(s) when you will receive the offering. Put this date on your church calendar.
- ☐ Be creative! Plan promotional activities to involve people of all ages. Ask teachers to use the materials in the weeks leading up to the offering.
- ☐ Familiarize yourself with each of the promotional pieces:
 - 2025 Planning and Resource Guide
 - One new video “Be the Light” (Runtime of 1:37) can be found at www.abc-oghs.org
 - Poster
 - Printed bulletin inserts
 - Offering envelopes

EDUCATE AND PROCLAIM! (During May)

- ☐ Know what the offering is and what it provides. Yes, OGHS is a tangible way American Baptists provide for the human needs of our world. The offering provides:
 - **Emergency relief** available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for urgent or acute needs brought about by disasters of natural or human origin;
 - **Development projects** focused on meeting chronic human need by enabling individuals or groups to establish or maintain a more adequate quality of life; and
 - **Ministries to displaced persons** focused on holistic ministry to immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants—those within the U.S. and around the world who find themselves someplace other than what they have known to be home.
- ☐ Include announcements and mission stories in your newsletter.
- ☐ Make sure offering envelopes are in the pew racks each week.
- ☐ Display the offering poster in a prominent place. Set up a visual display to track the offering. Update your display each week.
- ☐ Enclose bulletin inserts in weekly bulletins. Create additional bulletin inserts by photocopying the Mission Stories found in this guide.





photo: @disciplephoto

WORSHIP! (During June)

- ☐ Personalize the offering with a testimony from a church member or guest about why giving to this offering is important to them. Many people have been personally impacted by natural disasters—hurricanes, fires, mudslides, etc. Others have personal testimonies about helping to resettle refugees in their community—invite them to share.
- ☐ Read Mission Stories during worship services as “Mission Moments.”
- ☐ Have a One Great Hour of Sharing sermon and Children’s Moment prior to the week you receive the offering.
- ☐ Use the worship resources during worship services and in small groups.

CELEBRATE! (During June)

- ☐ Announce to the congregation the result of their gifts and celebrate their generosity. Offer thanks and announce the gift total in your newsletter and worship bulletin. (If you did not meet your goal, celebrate what you have received and announce that you have set aside one or two more Sundays for people to give.)

FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Keep a record of promotional activities and what worked well for your church. Archive resources for future years.
- ☐ **Forward offering receipts to either your Regional Office or the ABCUSA, P.O. Box 851, Valley Forge, PA 19482.**

Alternative schedule

Does your worship attendance drop in June? Consider receiving the One Great Hour of Sharing offering in May. Receiving the offering on a Sunday with maximum attendance can make a big difference.



MISSION STORIES

“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.”

Matthew 5:14 (The Message)

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“You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.”

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BE THE LIGHT: IN ANADARKO, OKLAHOMA

Wichita Community Church (WCC) in Anadarko, Okla., has been a beacon of light in its community for years. Established in 1908 by the missionary Rev. George W. Hicks and his wife, it provides spiritual guidance to the community under the leadership of Pastor Damon Smith and his wife Lois, who also serve as vice-moderator and treasurer of the Oklahoma Indian Baptist Association, respectively. They are both led in their calling by our Lord Jesus Christ who said: “I must work the works of Him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” (John 9:4-5)

Like many rural towns, Anadarko faces economic challenges, including a relatively high poverty rate. American Baptist Home Mission Societies supports WCC in its mission of helping the community flourish through faith and material support to families in need. “We as a church truly feel the presence of God through the mission work with youth and adults of the community when they least expected,” said Lois Smith.

WCC supports youth who are at the core of its ministry.



Youth from the church participated in the 2nd Annual Harvest Soul 3-Day Bible Camp located at the Wichita Community Church.

BE THE LIGHT: IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Sometimes God calls us to be the light in deep darkness. This is where International Ministries Global Servants, Dr. Bill and Ann Clemmer, have found themselves in Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) partnering with HEAL Africa, a Christian teaching hospital and holistic ministry center.

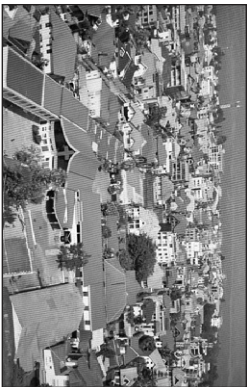
After years of armed conflict between warring militia and government groups that displaced more than two million people, on January 29, 2025 the M23 militia group overcame the government and UN forces. More than three days of intense fighting in and around the city left over 7,000 people dead and many more injured. The city of Goma is now under M23 control.

To escape the fierce fighting in the streets, fifty street children took refuge in the Heal Africa Sunday School buildings. Though bullets came through the roof and shattered windows in the room where they were sheltering, not a child was hurt. A two-year old boy who lost both parents in the fighting was among those sheltered and a search is underway for any distant family member.

Bill and Ann have been serving in eastern Congo for ten of their thirty-three years with International Ministries and have experienced dark times: Ebola, earthquakes, the eruption of nearby volcanoes, etc.



Ann with a 2-year-old boy whose mother was killed in the crossfire; and is now living in the shelter as staff attempt to find any family members.



Heal Africa Hospital in the city of Goma on Lake Kivu

The recent violent takeover by the militia group has left a darkness not previously imagined. Disturbing accounts of rampant sexual violence and other atrocities continue to surface. An edict went out from the current authorities in mid-February that any child found on the streets henceforth would be picked up and taken away.

Bill and Ann initially took refuge in the neighboring Rwandan city of Rwanda side of the DRC border. Now, early each day, they walk to the border crossing and into Goma, where they are light to those in desperate need. They serve with their partners, doing what they can to make a difference, then late in the afternoon they cross the border and return to their temporary home.

HEAL Africa hospital where the Clemmer's serve is facing a significant influx of trauma cases including gunshot wounds, burns, lost limbs and fractures. As more people venture out of hiding to seek medical treatment, the injured continue to flood the hospital. Severe shortages of medical supplies, fuel, and food remain. The hospital is not the only program in need.

Ann shared, "Three of our Sunday School children were admitted with gunshot wounds and are recovering from surgery; sadly, three of our other students, ages 10-11, were killed on the street on the way to our facility." Overnight, the need for 24-7 feeding, clothing, and sheltering of the children who came during the fighting became a necessity which along with classes and recreational activities continues to this day.

Your gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing are one way in which the Clemmer's are being the light in Goma. With a \$25,000 emergency relief grant, they have provided critical funding for the hospital, as well as securing the mattresses, desks, chairs, and food to turn Sunday School rooms into a 24-hour shelter.

And the two-year old boy who lost his parents in the fighting now has forty-nine older brothers and sisters that help to care for him, passing him around amongst themselves, showering him with love and affection. He has been given the name "Christ en Vie", Christ is Alive. As Bill shared, "The city has fallen.... but the Kingdom will come."

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Children from Wichita Community Church participated in a "Prayer Walk" through the downtown streets of Anadarko, Oklahoma.

Sixteen children attend services regularly; in summer, twenty-five children attend the vacation Bible school. "Number one goal is to teach them of Christ and to take Him as their Savior and learn that they have a purpose in life as they accept and serve Christ as one," added Lois Smith. "Faith just starts with a small seed and just grows and grows with the word."

With the support of ABHMS, sometimes through One Great Hour of Sharing grants, Wichita Community has provided aid via a multitude of initiatives: Community outreach in-sack lunches, Vacation Bible School, fall Bible camp, back to school supplies, household baskets, hygiene products, warm clothing during the Christmas holidays, holiday dinners, and an Easter egg hunt. "This is a church that has continued to make steady progress, and we continue to watch them with joy and anticipation of how the Lord is moving among them," said Rev. Ben Sullivan, ABHMS' national coordinator for Native American Ministries.

Giving to One Great Hour of Sharing enables churches like Wichita Community Church to assist those most beloved by our Lord - those in need. Give abundantly today and be a beacon of light!

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MEET YOUR WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

Have you ever wondered how the gifts that you give to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering get to the places where they are put to work? This is the responsibility of the World Relief Committee ("Committee"). The Committee's purpose is to support, enable and encourage emergency relief and disaster rehabilitation, development assistance, and ministry to displaced persons. The source of funds for this work is the gifts you give to the One Great Hour of Sharing annual offering.

The Committee is made up of people from different parts of our American Baptist life:

- 7 voting members elected as follows:
 - 2 from the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries);
 - 2 from the Board of Directors of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies;
 - 2 from the Board of General Ministries; and
 - 1 from the Executive Committee of the American Baptist Women's Ministries.
- 4 staff members: a representative each from the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries), the American Baptist Home Mission Societies, the American Baptist Churches USA, and the American Baptist Women's Ministries.
- The World Relief Officer serves as staff to the committee.

The Committee meets two times a year. Each individual project proposal is submitted via a completed application that is presented by the appropriate staff representative and then considered by the Committee. A formal vote is taken on each application. Although only the voting members vote on final decisions, all members can give input on each of the grant applications prior to the decision being made. The approval process is followed by a time of prayer for the partners who will receive the funding and for the people whose lives will be made better in some way by the project.

The Committee also receives and reviews the annual financial report on the income and use of all One Great Hour of Sharing monies.

Your committee members are as follows:

Rev. Dr. Tamara Scott (Chair), Kalamazoo, MI

Rev. Yamina Apolinaris, Caguas, PR

Mr. Roger Chamberlain, Fairfield, OH

Rev. Corey Fields, Wilmington, DE

Mrs. DuRhonda Pinegar, Greenwood, IN

Mr. Bill Poland, Ellis, KS

Mrs. Lovena Van Haaften, Pella, IA



WHERE YOUR GIFTS MADE A DIFFERENCE

2024

When you take a global view of our world, natural disasters occur every week. When you add war, civil wars, and ethnic conflict, slower-moving disasters continue to fester each day. Larger disasters are captured by our news media, and word of these tragedies is brought into our homes. It is difficult to imagine the suffering of those whose lives are forever changed. However, many needs of our world—whether in a neighboring state or half the world away—remain uncovered by our news media. With our extensive network of international and domestic partners, American Baptists can—and do—make a difference wherever and whenever disaster strikes.

Here’s where your gifts made a difference in 2024.

EMERGENCY RELIEF GRANTS



Around the World

COUNTRY	SITUATION CALLING FOR A RESPONSE
Burundi	Free Baptist Church of Burundi - Flood Relief
Cuba	Fraternidad de Iglesias Bautistas de Cuba - Hurricane Relief
Cuba	Convención Bautista de Cuba Oriental - Hurricane Relief
DR Congo.....	Heal Africa - Food Assistance to IDPs in Goma
India.....	Kuki Baptist Convention - Ethnic Violence
Lebanon.....	Resurrection Church of Beirut - Lebanese Refugees
Lebanon.....	Beirut Baptist School - Support for Lebanese Refugees
Liberia	Liberia Tribal Baptist Convention - Rain Storm Relief
Myanmar.....	Mekong Minority Foundation - Civil Strife Relief
Myanmar.....	Mekong Minority Foundation - Flood Relief
Philippines.....	Companion with the Poor - Flood Relief in Manila
Rwanda.....	Seira Community Church - Storm Relief
Spain.....	Unión Evangélica Bautista España - Flood Relief
Sri Lanka	Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service - Flood Relief
Thailand	Thailand Baptist Missionary Fellowship - Flood Relief

Here at Home

STATE	SITUATION CALLING FOR A RESPONSE
AZ	Monte Vista Cross Cultural Church, Phoenix: Good Samaritan Program- Responding to the Southern Border Crisis
FL	Mt. Olivet Development Corporation, Fort Lauderdale: Hurricane Helene Statewide Disaster Relief and Recovery Effort
MA.....	Massachusetts Baptist Multicultural Ministries, Lowell: Emergency Assistance to migrants bused from Texas to Boston
MD.....	American Baptist Churches of the South, Windsor Mill: Hurricane Milton Emergency Disaster Outreach
NE	American Baptist Churches of Nebraska, Omaha: Elkhorn Nebraska Tornado
TX.....	The Hope 3741 Ministries, Houston: 2024 May Floods, Derecho & Hurricane Beryl
WV	American Baptist Men, Parkersburg: Hurricane Helene Recovery

In addition to emergency relief, One Great Hour of Sharing also provided funds for development projects – projects which address chronic needs – in the following countries and states listed below and highlighted on the next page.

GRANTS FOR DEVELOPMENT & MINISTRY TO DISPLACED PERSONS

Around the World

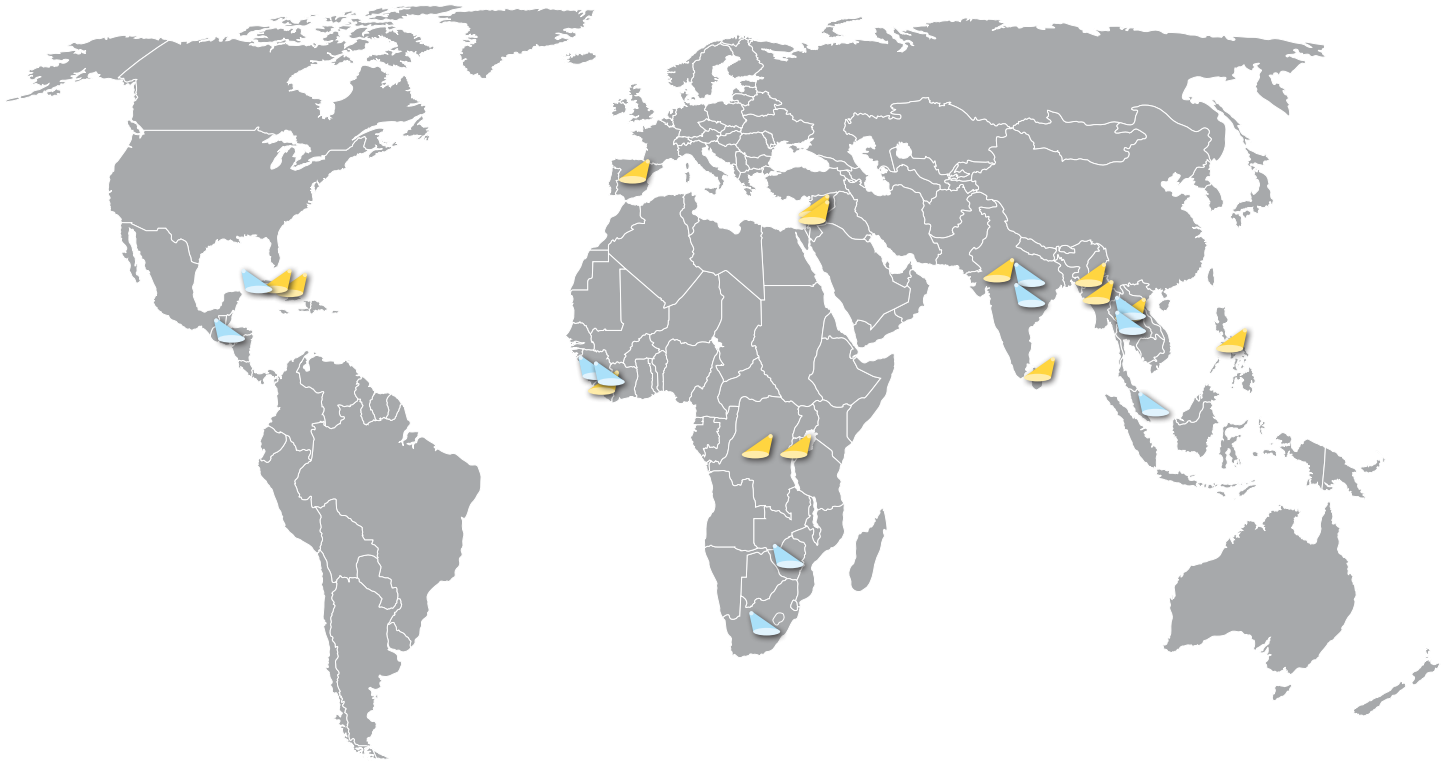
COUNTRY	MINISTRY
Cuba	IM Global Consultant Mylinda Baits: Restorative Arts Program
India.....	Arunachal Baptist Church Council (ABCC): SEVA KENDRA Skills Training Center
India.....	North East India Christian University (NECU): Furnishings for Women's Hostel
Latin America.....	Various Partners: Talita Cumi Girls Club Program
Liberia	Lott Carey Baptist Mission School: Renovation of Elementary Classroom Building
Malaysia	Judson Bible College: Teacher Training
South Africa	Baptist Union of South Africa: Women's Dept Standing Together Against Gender Based Violence
Sierra Leone	Baptist Convention of Sierra Leone: Restoring BCSL Headquarters
Thailand	New Life Center Foundation: Facilities Repairs and Improvements
Thailand	Integrated Ministries for Ethnic Minorities Foundation (IMEMF) - Promote Independence & Strengthen Families in Northern Thailand
Zimbabwe.....	Trees of Peace Africa: Community Development Through Peacebuilding - Phase 2

Here at Home

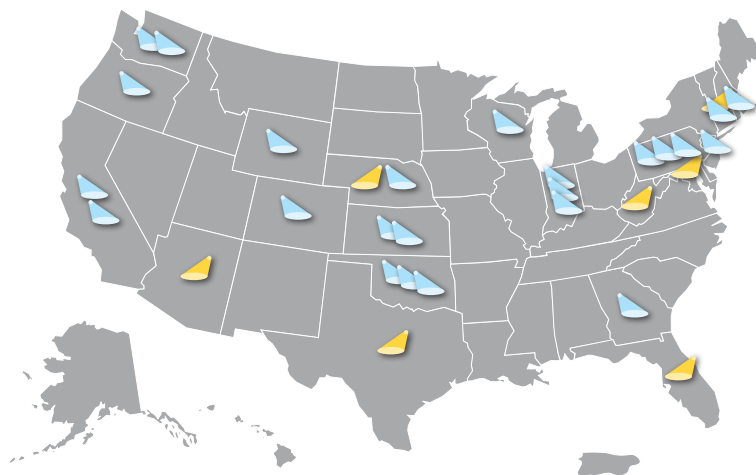
STATE	MINISTRY
CA	Oakland Baptist Mission Baptist Church, Oakland: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
CA	First Baptist Church, Maywood: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
CO	God's Will Christian Fellowship, Denver: Food and Shelter Grant
CT	First Baptist Church in New Haven, New Haven: The Mika Project
GA	Mt. Calvary Baptist Church, Atlanta: Food and Shelter Grant
IN.....	Iglesia Bautista Betesda, Indianapolis: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
IN.....	Hope for Tomorrow, Indianapolis: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
IN.....	Tu Refugio Seguro, North Vernon: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
KS.....	Stitching Change, Kansas City: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
KS.....	Burmese Community of Kansas, Kansas City: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
MA.....	First Nepali Baptist Church, Boston: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
MT	First Crow Indian Baptist Church, Lodge Grass: Food and Shelter Grant
NE	First Baptist Church of Lincoln, Lincoln: Food and Shelter Grant
NJ	Bethel Haitian Baptist Church, Union: ESL Program
OK	All Tribes Baptist Church, Geary: Food and Shelter Grant
OK	Wichita Community Church, Anadarko: Food and Shelter Grant
OK	Watonga Indian Baptist Church, Watonga: Food and Shelter Grant
OR.....	Eloheh Indigenous Center, Yamill: A Well for Water
PA.....	American Baptist Women's Ministry, King of Prussia: M.A.D. Youth Collective Summer Camp
PA.....	Rankin Christian Center, Rankin: Food and Shelter Grant
PA.....	First Baptist Church of Philadelphia, Philadelphia: Food and Shelter Grant
WA	First Baptist Comunidad Cristiana, Yakima: Housing for Disadvantaged and At-Risk Youth
WA	First Baptist Comunidad Cristiana, Yakima: Refugee and Immigration Ministry Grant
WI	Milwaukee Christian Center, Milwaukee: Building Opportunities for Young People Program



Around the World



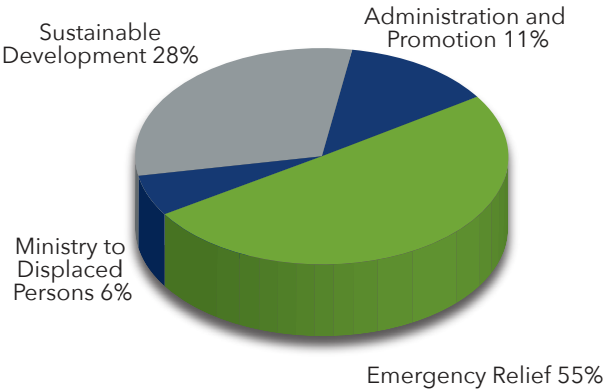
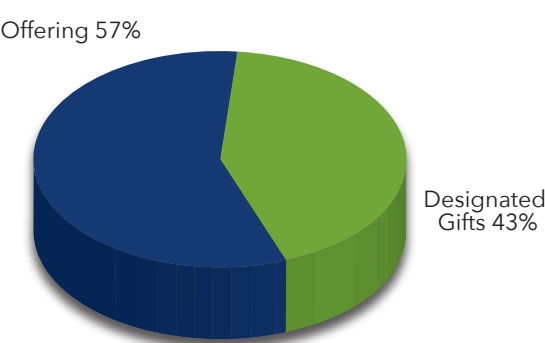
Here at Home



Development grants: 
Emergency Relief grants: 

2024 ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING FINANCIAL REPORT

HOW YOU SHARED IN 2024



Changing lives through the offering

OGHS giving from churches and individuals	
Offering	\$ 840,315
Designated Gifts	\$ 636,635
Total	\$ 1,476,950

Emergency Relief	\$ 847,970
Ministry to Displaced Persons	\$ 86,870
Sustainable Development	\$ 431,020
Administration and Promotion	\$ 176,298
Total	\$ 1,542,158

DID YOU KNOW?



Photo: Public Domain, trumanlibrary.gov

Harry S. Truman, 33rd U.S. President

The One Great Hour of Sharing offering began seventy-six years ago in response to the devastation of World War II. On Saturday evening, March 26, 1949, a national broadcast titled "One Great Hour" featured a remarkable assembly of national leaders and celebrities. The 33rd U.S. President, Harry S. Truman's, radio address during the broadcast included the following:

"There are thousands of children in foreign lands today who have no memory of their parents, no knowledge of the meaning of the words "home" and "family," and who have forgotten what it feels like to have enough to eat. There are hopeless thousands who wander among the shattered towns seeking a place to rest, seeking security and a chance to begin their lives anew. There are many who pray to God only in secret, fearing persecution if they profess their beliefs openly.

It is hard for us to comprehend grief and distress such as this because we in America are so much more fortunate. Our country has been blessed with material riches. Our homes are secure. We can go to our churches and worship God as we desire.

We know that we enjoy these great blessings not because of any special merit on our part, but because of the bounty of God. It is to His Providence that we owe the richness of our country and our heritage of freedom. Since these good things come to us from Him, we know that we must use them for the good of others in accordance with His will."

The broadcast concluded by asking Americans to give generously the next morning in their churches. More than 75,000 churches responded.

Today, One Great Hour of Sharing serves people in over 80 countries around the world. Sponsored by five Christian U.S. denominations and Church World Service, One Great Hour of Sharing makes sure that we can respond to needs as soon as they happen and that tens of thousands of people receive support for ongoing relief, rehabilitation, and development.

The World Relief Committee of the American Baptist Board of General Ministries reviews each development project request funded by the One Great Hour of Sharing offering received from American Baptists. Gifts reach the ministries and people in need through a network of regional and international partnerships with the following:

American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (International Ministries)

American Baptist Home Mission Societies

Baptist World Aid – the compassionate arm of the Baptist World Alliance, supporting three areas of ministry: relief, development, and support of national partners.

Church World Service – Founded in 1946, Church World Service is a relief, development, and refugee assistance ministry supported by 36 Protestant, Orthodox, and Anglican denominations in the United States. Church World Service transforms communities around the globe through just and sustainable responses to hunger, poverty, displacement, and disaster.

THEME INTERPRETATION: BE THE LIGHT



SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 5:14-16 [THE MESSAGE]

“Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.”

The fifth chapter of Matthew’s Gospel opens with the Sermon on the Mount and Beatitudes. At first glance, Jesus’ words are shocking—people who are burdened in mind, body, and spirit are actually blessed!

Despite their situation or condition, they are already winning...or maybe, it is because of their pain that blessings come. The anxiety, fear, grief, confusion, hunger, discouragement, and despair they experience actually put them closer to God. Jesus does not glorify pain; rather, he teaches that such suffering puts them first in God’s heart. God is there to help and heal—as a gift, no conditions, and no strings. They are part of God’s family, God’s Reign, and God’s Kingdom. God’s Kingdom is more than a place or future destination—it is a relationship with a loving and just God.

Jesus does not sugar-coat the reality of most people during his day. He declares that their suffering is not the end of the story. God sees them and hears their cries; God moves to alleviate their pain, in the short run and the long run. God’s Reign of love and healing is already happening—bringing life out of death, joy out of sorrow, hope out of despair.

Jesus cautions that the response to God’s blessing is not one of passivity. He makes clear that God’s children are blessed and are to be a blessing to and for others; those who receive, are to give back.

God’s Reign is not a spectator sport; the faithful do not have the option to sit back and watch events unfold. They are invited and challenged to be something and to do something. Followers of Jesus are transformed—from the inside out—as they receive the gifts of God’s grace and are called to gift others with love, compassion, and generosity.

Jesus’ entire ministry is active—teaching, preaching, healing, connecting. Jesus sets the standard for “Kingdom-living”—where love, unity, and harmony are the benchmarks for community life. Jesus invites us all to be active—doing what we can to embody compassion; to stand up for equity and fairness; to care for those in need without seeking reward or notoriety. Jesus teaches his disciples—and us—that God’s Reign is a present reality and a future hope.

For Jesus, God’s Reign is about forming communities of diverse people, living as siblings, caring for each other and the created order; communities of justice and love where all are fed, sheltered, healed, and safe. Jesus declares that God’s Reign is happening right now, even as we wait for its fulfillment.

Jesus invites his listeners—and us—to live fully into the gift and grace God offers—be the gift that keeps on giving; be the light that keeps on shining. Many of the ordinary people listening to, and eavesdropping on, Jesus’ conversation with his disciples that day understand and dedicate themselves to the challenge.

Jesus assures us that we are what God intends—open-hearted, generous, compassionate—it’s already in us. By fully living into our identity as children of God, we spread God-colors throughout the world...bearing light, hope, and love.

Continued on next page



Have you ever watched suncatchers? Suncatchers are ornaments made of glass, crystal, or some translucent material. Usually hung in a window or outdoors, suncatchers spin to reflect and filter light, casting color in the area surrounding them—hues of blue, red, green, purple, and yellow: a limitless array of colors and patterns that symbolize warmth, love, compassion, generosity, and hospitality. Suncatchers bear and spread color—just as our good deeds bear light and send color into the world.

Be light—in your home, church, and community—tutor students after school; make a casserole for a bereaved family; gather signatures for petitions that highlight important issues; pick up trash around your neighborhood; make blankets for the unsheltered—let the need beckon you to action.

Be light—in the world by making a generous contribution to One Great Hour of Sharing. Your gift supports those who are doing ministry throughout the United States and across the globe—bringing hope, expertise, compassion, and love to places you may never visit and people you may never meet. Your giving to OGHS provides funding and hands-on assistance and promotes collaboration with local and international partners.

Be the light! For the sake of sisters and brothers who have renewed hope because you care enough to shine.

Be the light! So that people around the world can find their way and know that there is a path forward.

Be the light! Sharing God-colors with all you encounter!

Give generously to One Great Hour of Sharing! Follow in the footsteps of The Light of the World! Shine brightly!

SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY AND SERMON STARTER

BE THE LIGHT



What would you do if you knew you could not fail? It's a question we should ask ourselves regularly. It is a question that Jesus implies when he tells his disciples—and us—to be light, bringing God-colors in the world.

Jesus stands in the tradition of Moses by interpreting God's vision for creation. The Beatitudes and Ten Commandments let us know that communities of justice, love, compassion, and generosity are desired by God and are possible—here and now.

God calls us to live with integrity—with head and heart connected, with intention and action aligned.

In Matthew 5, Jesus teaches that God is already transforming and loving the world, already empowering God's people to be all they can be—lights bringing God-colors to every corner of creation.

Jesus challenges his disciples—and us—to live as if believing in and trusting God makes a difference. To be light because that, simply, is who we are.

Jesus sets a high bar for discipleship: preaching and teaching despite resistance from some and outright hostility from others; healing on the spot instead of keeping office hours; meaningfully engaging those cast out and on the margins of society; breaking bread with the ne'er-do-wells at tables denied to them.

Jesus challenges us to do likewise and from a place of blessedness—we already have everything we need to be light-bearers. We need only to shine.

As you prepare to preach and teach for One Great Hour of Sharing, make clear that Jesus is not promoting transactional faith. We don't bargain with God for favors or blessings. We expect nothing in return for being fully who God has created us to be. We do good works in gratitude for all that God has done for us, as a response of thankfulness.

If your church has stained glass windows, invite the congregation to think about what the windows portray and why. Share any history you have about the windows. Ask how the scenes look as the intensity of sunlight changes throughout the day. How are the windows light-bearers of God's love and presence?

If your church does not have stained glass, use an example found on the Internet. One example is the website for St. Gregory of Nyssa Episcopal Church in San Francisco (<https://www.saintgregorys.org>). While not stained glass, the "Dancing Saints" is an iconic installation of ninety persons that wraps around the

church rotunda—with a 12-foot-tall dancing Christ. The saints are a wide array of persons from a multitude of time periods, faith traditions and backgrounds—King David, Frances of Assisi, Anne Frank, and Malcolm X, among others. As the congregation dances around the altar during the liturgy, the saints dance above, proclaiming a sweeping, universal vision of God's light shining through human life.

Who would you include in a modern stain glass window? Who would you see in a window that represents One Great Hour of Sharing? This is an opportunity to identify and honor those who have been or are living into the light to which God has called them. Invite your members to think about how they can be light-bearers for others.

Jesus' call for us to be light is ongoing. Communities are in crisis. Storms devastate the countryside. Far too many persons are vulnerable—lacking power, resources, and social support—and are brutally mistreated. The earth is abused and creation is disrespected. Justice is denied.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for people in need.

You offer light when disasters hit.

You offer light when conditions threaten families and communities.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light for communities here and across the globe.

You offer light that restores structures and transforms lives.

You offer light that blesses others to shine.

When you give to One Great Hour of Sharing, you are light that shines today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

You—we—are light-bearers.

Let us be the light.

Let us shine.

Let us go public.

Find a hilltop.

Let us keep open house and be generous with our lives and in our giving.

Let us make a difference—give to One Great Hour of Sharing!



CHILDREN'S MOMENT

Constructed to be used in your own words, or to be followed as a script, this children's moment focuses on a particular person or persons in the congregation who shine their light into the world. You are encouraged to adjust the script and design to fit your virtual or hybrid worship context.

Theme

One Great Hour of Sharing reminds us that we are all to "be the light" through our actions in the world. There are many people who are examples of God's light and generosity through the way they live their lives. Sometimes, we just need to think about them in new ways.

Materials needed

You will not need any materials for this children's sermon except for an affirming listening ear, eager to engage children's ideas!

Script Suggestion

I want to ask you a very serious question: Have you ever failed at something?

Give time for responses.

Most of us don't like to fail, do we? If we are going to do something, we like to be a success.

Well, guess what. In Matthew 5, Jesus tells us there is something at which we cannot fail. Let me share it with you—

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven. (The Message)

or

¹⁴ You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house.

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven. (CEB)

Jesus says, YOU are the light of the world. And that you are to let your light shine before people. Being light is something we really can't fail at, but you know what, sometimes we can struggle a little.

We want to shine our light brightly, but maybe we are mean to another person, or we don't help when we are asked to by our parents.

We can share our light when we help others, share an encouraging word, or provide assistance through the One Great Hour of Sharing offering. We can be the light when we help other students at school; help our parents make a casserole for a family who loses a loved one; or pick up trash around our neighborhood. There are SO MANY things we can do, right?

But you know what we need in our lives? We need examples that we can follow.

Here, it is appropriate to tell a story about a person in your congregation (or more than one person) who regularly shines their light brightly into the world.

Well, guess what, you have a chance to be the light. You can participate in today's service by offering a special offering to One Great Hour of Sharing. By doing that, you shine your light throughout the world.

You can share any further details about the offering or other community details.

Can we pray a blessing together?

Very good! Let's pray:

You can pray extemporaneously or use this prayer:

Dear Lord, thank you for loving us so much and showing us how we can love others by being a light in the world. By offering a gift today to the special offering or doing something good for another person, we shine as Jesus wanted us to. We can love those we will never even meet sharing light with them through our gifts. With thankful hearts, we pray. Amen.

OFFERING REMINDER

Imagine the difference we can make—the light we can be in the world—when we join together with other people of faith who are giving to the same cause. For over 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has been one way churches and followers of Jesus generously share out of their bounty with those who may need some assistance. You will have the opportunity to do just that as next week [two weeks, three weeks, On Sunday ____], we will receive a special offering for One Great Hour of Sharing.

Your generous gifts to our yearly focus on mission enables our church to make a difference in lives and communities around the world. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that we are the light of the world. Eugene Peterson paraphrases that quite simply - You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world.

One Great Hour of Sharing understands the needs—immediate and long-term. One Great Hour of Sharing is there when needs are most pressing. By giving generously, you are the light that brings life forth in desolate places. By giving generously, you are the light providing spaces for others to be the light—bringing expertise and sustainable approaches to farming. By giving generously, you are sharing beams of light today, tomorrow, and well into the future.

At the conclusion of your worship service, distribute battery operated tealights for people to take home as reminders that they are called to BE THE LIGHT. Many battery operated tealights are long-lasting—up to 200 hours—which will allow for the tealight to shine the light for over a week.



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Call to Worship

One: Be the light, bearing it to all the world

All: No hiding.

One: Be the light, sharing it with all you encounter.

All: No stalling.

One: Be the light, so that our neighbors can find their way.

All: No holding back.

One: Be the light, so that the world will know there is a path forward.

All: No hiding. No stalling. No holding.

We move forward to be the light.

Prayer of Invocation

Creator and Creative God, The sun rises in the morning, bringing forth the many-colored hues of light illuminating the day. At night, the moon rises to illuminate the sky. The stars shine, giving light where there is none. Regardless of the time of day or night, you send light to the world. You call each of us to bear the light in that same way, no matter the time of day or the situation we find ourselves in. As we worship, we follow in the footsteps of the one who was the light of the world, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Litany of Responsive Reading

One: When communities are in crisis,

All: Be the light.

One: When tornados devastate the countryside,

All: Be the light.

One: When human beings are mistreated,

All: Be the light.

One: When the earth is abused and creation is disrespected,

All: Be the light.

One: When justice is denied,

All: Be the light.

One: When another is in need,

All: Be the light.

One: Light-bearers you are,

All: We will be the light.

One: Go public. Find a hilltop.

All: We will be the light.

Continued on next page

Invitation to the Offering

Lea Morris wrote a song called "Be the Light."

There is always a light - when we are ready to see it

There is always a light - when we are ready to be it

To see the light, to be the light, to raise our eyes in
the dark of night

[To climb this hill, together we will].

The song ends with the words, "Be a gift to the world."
You are invited to offer the gift of light to others around
the world through One Great Hour of Sharing.

Jesus' call for us to be light is an ongoing opportunity
for us to offer a gift to another. The world needs light
more than ever before. We cannot be in all of these
places ourselves or even see them with our own eyes,
but through our generous tithes, offerings, and special
gifts, we can be a light which shines day or night. In
that spirit, let us share now!

Prayer of Dedication

Generous God, we offer these gifts in the spirit of light
and with a heart full of gratitude for what we have been
given. These offerings are one way of showing our
commitment to sharing with those who are in need,
neighbors near and far, whom we are unlikely to meet.
As we share, we shine the light of our faith for brothers
and sisters we may never meet. Bless the gifts, just as
you have us, with an extra measure of your grace. In
Christ's name, Amen.

Charge & Benediction

[Encourage those in your congregations to shine the
lights on their cell phones during the benediction as
a way of signaling that they will be the light shining
in the places where they find themselves and that,
collectively, the light is brighter when we join others in
being the light.]

One: May you always be the light, shining bright in the
darkness, just as Jesus calls us to.

**All: Let your kindness be a beacon, your
compassion a guiding star, and your love a
radiant flame.**

One: As you illuminate the world with your actions,
may others see your good deeds and be inspired
to glorify the divine.

**All: We go forth, empowered by faith, shining our
light for all to see.**

Hymn Suggestions

- This Little Light of Mine - African American Spiritual
- Bring Forth the Kingdom - Marty Haugen
- Gather Us In - Marty Haugen
- O Word of God, Incarnate - William W. How
- Jesus Bids Us Shine - Susan Warner
- Christ Be Our Light - Bernadette Ferrell
- As a Fire Is Meant for Burning - Ruth Duck
- O Jesus I Have Promised - John E. Bode / Arthur H. Mann
- Song for the Nations - Chris Christensen (referenced in last year's materials)
- Salt & Light - Jan and John L'Ecuyer
- Shine, Jesus, Shine - Graham Kendrick
- Go, Light Your World - Kathy Troccoli
- We Are Called to Be God's People - Thomas Jackson
- Pass It On - Kurt Kaiser
- Sois la Semilla (You Are the Seed) - Cesareo Gabaraín

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY: SHINE BRIGHTLY!

Overview and Instructions

To begin this children's activity, there are two optional activities. Option 1 is for older children (4th grade and above) while option 2 is for children pre-school through 3rd grade. Devoting about 20 minutes to each segment will result in an 80-minute class. For shorter class periods, you could choose between the object lesson and activity for 60 minutes. The beginning of each segment notes supplies that are needed.

Option 1 – Create An Acronym (4th grade and older)

Post the letters S H I N E on a sheet of paper or newsprint. If you want to make it an individual activity, give each participant a paper with the letters written down the left margin. If you want to make it a group activity, post it on newsprint.

Ask participants what words go with each letter to create a phrase. An example:

S	Son's
H	Heart
I	Is
N	Never
E	Empty

Jesus' heart is never empty and always giving and generous toward us.

If this is done as an individual activity, share the acronyms with the group.

Option 2 – Read A Book (Pre-School through 3rd grade)

Read the book *Little Mole Finds Hope* by Glenys Nellist. Little Mole lives underground, where it is dark, but his mother helps him find signs of life and spring around him.

After reading the book, lead a discussion in which you ask participants how they can see signs of light even when things feel like the opposite.

SCRIPTURE READING

Read the One Great Hour of Sharing focus text in these two versions:

Matthew 5:14-16 from THE MESSAGE paraphrase:

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you'll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:14-16 from THE INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BIBLE:

¹⁴ "You are the light that gives light to the world. A city that is built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ And people don't hide a light under a bowl. They put the light on a lampstand. Then the light shines for all the people in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, you should be a light for other people. Live so that they will see the good things you do. Live so that they will praise your Father in heaven."

As you read, ask the children to act out the scripture. Rather than giving them actions, invite them to create actions. You could read the scripture a few times and then see what actions emerge.

Afterwards, ask them to reflect on why they chose certain actions for the various phrases.

Continued on next page

ACTIVITY – CREATE LANTERNS

You will need the following supplies:

- clear plastic cups,
- tissue paper (yellow and orange),
- scissors,
- glue, and
- battery-operated tea light candles

Instructions

Cut the tissue paper into small squares or strips. Mix yellow and orange pieces together to create a warm, glowing effect.

Have the children glue the tissue paper pieces onto the outside of the plastic cup. They can cover the entire surface or create patterns – the goal is to make the cup look like it's glowing with light.

Once the glue is dry, place a battery-operated tea light candle inside the cup. Turn off the lights in the room and let the children observe how their lanterns shine and glow. If the room cannot be darkened, they will be able to take them home and see how it works then.

Remind them of the scripture reading from earlier. Discuss what it means to “be the light” in their own lives – how can they show kindness, love, and help others around them?

Encourage them to think of specific actions they can take to brighten someone else’s day or to make a positive impact in their community.

After the discussion, have a moment of reflection where each child can think about one way they can be a light to others this week. They can write or draw their ideas on a small piece of paper and place it inside their lanterns as a reminder.

ACTIVITY – CHALK ART

You will need the following supplies: sidewalk chalk

With permission, invite the children to draw images that depict light on the church walkways or sidewalks. Examples might include candles, the sun/moon/stars, light bulbs, etc.

By doing this outside, they are making a public witness of bearing light in the world.

Conclude this lesson by reminding the children of the importance of letting their light shine, just as Jesus taught. Encourage them to go out and spread kindness, love, and goodness wherever they go.



YOUTH ACTIVITY: FIND THE LIGHT

Overview and Instructions

Devoting about 20 minutes to each segment will result in a 60-minute class. You could adjust the Divine Game of Pinzatski for a longer youth session.

Opening Activity - Just A Glimpse

You will need the following supplies: two small Lego sets—each containing the same pieces—for each group you have.

Instructions

Before the class begins, the adult leader of the activity builds a small structure with one of the Lego sets and conceals it from the group. Then, the whole youth group works together to recreate the structure. Alternatively, you can have two groups working on the project if the number of youth present is large enough.

1) When the session begins, one member of the group comes up to look at the small structure for 30 seconds. They try to memorize it before returning to their group.

2) After they return to the group, they have 30 seconds to instruct them how to build an exact replica of the completed structure using their own set of Legos. The team cannot start to build until he/she has finished their instructions. Once instructions are given and they begin building, the first member can no longer say anything.

3) The group then gets 1 minute to attempt to recreate the structure.

4) After 1 minute of building, another group member can come up for “just a glimpse.” They then get 30 seconds to look at the structure before returning to the group to explain for 30 seconds and then the group continues to try to recreate the structure.

5) The game continues until the group completes the structure as best they can or, alternatively, you can designate a time for the game.

Discuss

After the groups have built the structures, ask some of these questions (or some of your own):

- What was difficult about the game?
- What was easy?

When the structure was hidden it was more difficult to make. Only certain people could see it. They were the ones who were providing “light” to the group.

- How much easier was it as more and more people were sharing the “light” (information) with the group?

Connecting To Scripture

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reminds us that we are the light of the world. Eugene Peterson’s The Message paraphrase says it like this:

¹⁴⁻¹⁶ “Here’s another way to put it: You’re here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We’re going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don’t think I’m going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I’m putting you on a light stand. Now that I’ve put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives. By opening up to others, you’ll prompt people to open up with God, this generous Father in heaven.

Discuss

- Have you ever “hid” your light from others? Why do you think you did that? Share some examples if you are comfortable.
- When we are open to others by sharing our light, they may find their own path to also share. Re-read the scripture above. What spiritual practices can you think of which help us remain “open” to sharing our light?

Continued on next page

Additional Optional Activity:

The Divine Game Of Pinzatski

Arthur and Ellen Pinzatski developed this fantastic game many years ago, while on their yearly camping trip to a beautiful lake. The original game consists of choosing a natural object and then describing to the best of your ability what characteristic of God is revealed. For example, a campfire might illustrate the purity of God, for God uses fire to burn what is holy, such as a sacrifice, but he also uses fire to burn up what is unholy in our lives.

What might God be saying to us through cloud formations or a hummingbird, a flower or moss on a rock?

As an adaptation of this game for our focus on One Great Hour of Sharing, you are being asked to choose a natural object and to describe how it shines light through it. For example, a campfire (as described above) gives off light to illuminate the darkness or could be used to cook food for hungry people.

There are two options for this game. First, you can simply mention an item and ask how this might shine the light of God's love through it.

Alternatively, you can send the youth out (individually or in groups) to look around the church and in the nearby area (ensuring safety of all involved) to take digital pictures of objects they see. When they return at the appointed time, they would show their images and explain how they shine the brightness of God's love and grace through them.

After the game, ask them to discuss:

- How did you pick out your objects? Did you have certain criteria?
- What would it be like if God kept the light (hid it) from shining from this object?



INTERGENERATIONAL ACTIVITY: THE LIGHT SHINES THROUGH

This activity is designed to help multiple generations work with one another to tell stories and create a project together. It can be adapted in many ways as the context and time available allows.

Take A Trip To The Sanctuary

The first part of this intergeneration activity is to take a trip to the church sanctuary if your sanctuary has stained glass windows. If the church has a historian or window expert, ask them to lead the tour.

If your church does not have stained glass windows, you could design a presentation on a computer from pictures found online.

Share the following information as you view the windows:

Throughout history, stained glass windows have been a staple in many Christian churches, known for their intricate designs and stunning visual display. However, why do these windows play such an important role in religious architecture?

Despite being primarily decorative features, stained glass windows hold a deeper symbolic meaning that has been appreciated by the Christian community for centuries.

Each color in stained glass windows has a specific symbolism in Christian art. Blue represents heaven, red signifies Christ's sacrifice and martyrdom, green symbolizes hope and growth, and purple represents royalty and penitence.

Stained glass windows are also used to visually narrate biblical stories. The intricate details and colors of the windows help to portray the story.

The use of light in stained glass windows represents the divine presence and illuminates the sanctuary with a mystical and ethereal glow. It symbolizes the presence of God and the light of faith.

Ask some wondering questions:

- 1) I wonder if you have a favorite window? Why is it your favorite?
- 2) I wonder if these windows help you describe your faith?
- 3) I wonder if one of these windows stands out to you and why?
- 4) I wonder what window you would add if you could design one?
- 5) I wonder how when the light shines through these windows into the sanctuary if it looks different in the morning than in the afternoon? Why do you think the light looks different at various times of day?

Continued on next page

Make A Suncatcher

This activity is designed to make suncatchers. This video provides step by step instructions, including the materials that you will need:

<https://youtu.be/jlwyF9yKoJo>.

Once you have made the suncatchers, display them in an area where they can be seen and catch light!

Alternative Activity: Design A Stained Glass Window

Supplies:

Crayons, markers, or colored pencils; a sheet of blank paper for each participant/intergenerational group

If you did not want to create suncatchers as described above, you could have intergenerational groups draw and color the design for a stained glass window. As a part of their drawing, they could share how this new window will serve as a shining light, offering a story of faith to those who see it.

Instructions:

On the sheet of paper, ask participants to draw their own creative design of a stained glass window that could be placed in their sanctuary. Ask them to include symbols or colors that connect their window to being the light for others who see it. What will they see? What will they learn when they look at this window?

Conclusion

Ask the smaller groups to reflect together how the world would be different if the light was shining through all our lives all the time. Ask the group to come up with 10 sentences describing how we would know we were experiencing this. Here is an example – “The people of the world would know that everyone is loved and respected for who they are.”

Give the groups 3-4 minutes to work on this activity. See what group can come up with ten sentences.

Ask the groups to share their work with the whole group.



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. Through our gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing, many will receive assistance now and 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.

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.



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2025 OFFERING



Promotional
Materials Enclosed

www.abc-oghs.org

*You're here to be light, bringing out the
God-colors in the world. Matthew 5:14 (MSG)*