

- Who is your neighbor? Who do you want to be your neighbor? How is this a very difficult commandment?
- Some say “I like to deal with the problems around me in my community. Ethiopia is too far away.” Do you feel that way? Why or why not? (Sometimes this is a temporary excuse.)

As a group, sing “He's Got the Whole World in His Hands.” Thinking and singing lifts the soul.

- What does God say about serving His people in the World?
- Read Luke 18:13-23. What is sacrifice in my giving?
- What is most important in God's eyes?
- What do you hold in reserve, unwilling to give it for God? Money, time, family?

MY ROLE

Call to Action

- Service is the *doing* of good works, as *God leads and directs* through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- It is our responsibility to obey God, and to carry out the work to be done.
- TLLC Story.
- This project is completely do-able and realistic. We can change thousands of lives! NO MORE EXCUSES.
- We are presented with an opportunity to give, to make a difference in the lives of God’s children.
- What can you commit to give?
- Thrivent will match donations given by Thrivent members.
- Have someone share their commitment and what they plan to do to provide fresh water wells for needy Ethiopians.
Story of woman giving last week.
- What do you plan to do?
- Gather checks, pledges, matching forms, etc.

Close with prayer:

- Praise God for the love and grace He showers on His creation
- Thank God for the abundance of resources that we have.
- Ask God to be with and bless those less fortunate, those that need our help.
- Ask God to help direct each of us in the ways we are called to serve.
- Praise God for His love, His goodness and His grace.

Show DVD & Gather Funds

While group is exiting, donating, filling in forms – play the DVD again. Have participants try to lift and carry jerry cans.

OPTIONAL: If have time for more on servanthood.

Read Ephesians 2:10. We are each called to be servants today, regardless of the area in which we serve or the role in which we fill. God has already identified the precise ways in which He desires each of us to serve, and thereby fulfill our purpose.

- How do you feel God is calling you to serve?

Read Luke 12:48. We also have a personal capacity to serve. This scripture tells us “to whom much is given, much will be required.”

- What does this mean? What does the word “if” mean?
- What does capacity mean? (Whether a car has a large capacity gas tank or small one, they both are able to go some distance. Whether the tank is full or partly full there is still capacity.)

Read Matthew 25:31-46. (Parable of separating the sheep from the goats. “I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink.”)

- Will doing God’s will as given here help me do justice? Charity?
- In this passage, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his death, resurrection and second coming. He shares many stories about what they are to do until his return. Review the entire 25th chapter. What are we to do? (Be prepared and serve Him.)
- Why is serving others so important?
- How are we serving others?
- Does this passage frighten you? Encourage you? How?

OPTIONAL: If focus turns to domestic gifting.

Discussion Topic: The Definition of “Neighbor”

- How do we define neighbor?
 - o Read Luke 10:25-37 (Good Samaritan)
 - o “Go and do likewise.” What does this mean to me?

- Women spend less time walking for hours, and can spend more time at home with the children, preparing food, working, or improving family life.
- Women spend less time carrying heavy water containers. Their bodies no longer have to survive the daily wear and tear of collecting the family's water, consumed in back-breaking labor. Their health improves.
- Children no longer have to join their mothers in the long walks each day for water. Children can instead spend time in schools, obtaining an education.
- Clean water allows for clean hygiene.
- Clean water minimizes the profusion of water borne illnesses and diseases.
- Clean water allows for the growth of crops, and a way for families to grow an income.

Stories of the Solution

A woman weeping when she learned that she had been laboring all these years while she was unknowingly sleeping on top of water every night.

At the dedication of a well, a woman came up, crying with gratitude. She held the clay pot that she had used to carry water for miles every day for years. She took the job and smashed it on the ground. Never again would she or her daughters have to labor this way. Her daughters were free to better themselves and lead healthier lives.

Scriptures and Discussion #3

As a group, ask the following questions, reading the referenced scripture passages. You can read them, ask for volunteers to read them, or take turns reading them. Take time to discuss. As a leader, reference the information found in parentheses.

* Read Ephesians 2:10 – “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Nobody is excluded from the call to serve. We are all called to serve God and to serve others in need. God has already identified the ways in which he desires each one of us to serve Him, and thereby, fulfill our purpose.

*Read Philippians 2:1-11. Jesus spent His time on earth as a servant. He did not back away from servanthood, nor the ultimate sacrifice as a servant – His own sacrificial death. In fact, He considered these reasons to be his very purpose for His life and the fulfillment for His time on earth.

- How does this scripture affect you? Are you thankful, motivated, threatened, challenged?
- What is the most important to God?
- What do the words “emptied himself” and “form of slave” mean to you? What thoughts or images come to mind?

*Read John 21:15-17.

- What is Jesus asking Peter to do? (Feed My Sheep)
- This happened after Jesus was raised from the dead. How does this affect the meaning?
- Who is Peter to feed? With what? When?
- How does this conversation apply to us? Who are we to feed?

*Jesus is the water of life. Read John 4:13-14

- Jesus is our water of eternal life. We do not need to do anything to receive that free gift.
- When we are full of the life Jesus brings us, it will overflow. We will want to share it with others. Our love of God compels us to respond in love to others.
- The water of eternal life leads to spiritual growth, just as physical water leads to physical growth. What is spiritual growth? (Leads to serving others and putting love of God and others before love of self.)
- How does Christ's undeserved gift of love and salvation change you?
- How do you respond to that gift?

Application #3

Discuss the following questions as a group. Delve for details. Make the answers concrete. Apply this study to your lives.

- What does it mean to take on Christian responsibility in the context of the water crisis?
- What impact can we as a small group have on the water crisis in Ethiopia?
- What goal can we set for this group? For this congregation? For ourselves? Outside of this Church?

- What happened around this well on a daily basis? (People gathered throughout the day. Woman came in the morning to get water for their families. Shepherds brought their animals to drink. The Samaritan woman came at noon, during the heat of the day, when fewer people would be there.)
- What would happen if the well stopped producing? (The community would suffer until another water source could be found or created.)
- How did Jesus use the symbolism of the well to teach the woman? (Just as physical water gives physical life, the living water of Jesus can give spiritual life.)
- What did the well provide for the woman, physically and spiritually? (Physical health. And through Jesus, eternal salvation.)
- What did the woman do afterward? (Shared what Jesus gave her.)
- What are we called to do? How does this story impact you?

Application #2

Discuss the following questions as a group. Delve for details. Make the answers concrete. Apply this study to your lives.

- What is a well in my life? What nourishes me? Where does my community gather? (The family dinner table. Sunday worship.)
- How does the water and community available at the well affect my life? (Gives me energy, encouragement, life.)
- How would my life suffer without those?
- How can I provide those opportunities for others?

Water-Walk Activity

Refer to Jerry Cans. The woman at the well probably carried water in a pot back to her family. Women in Ethiopia use clay pots or plastic fuel containers. On average, a full container weighs 40-60 pounds. And they may carry this container for miles. Come and lift one up. Strap it on your shoulders. Carry it.

The weight of water. The weight of sin. Both weigh us down. Christ frees us from the weight of sin. He calls us to help others free themselves of the weight of water.

THE SOLUTION

Water to Thrive: The Facts

So what are we doing about this need? Review this information with the group. Read it aloud or have others in the group read it aloud. Take time to reflect after each statement.

The Location: Why Ethiopia?

- Ethiopia has the densest population of Lutherans in Africa, with over 4.8 million members.
- ?????

The Structure:

- Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and A Glimmer of Hope Foundation underwrite all operating and implementation costs so that 100% of donations go directly to Ethiopia and the project to be implemented.
- We work with proven partners with local management (over 2,000 wells completed to date).
- We provide a holistic solution, including management, training, well maintenance and local water councils.

The Solution:

- There are known, low cost solutions to the water crisis.
- \$3500 on average provides a fresh water well for a minimum of 400 rural Ethiopians
- Approximately \$7 provides access to fresh water for a single rural Ethiopian, changing that life forever.
- This is something that is completely do-able and realistic.
- These wells help to break the cycle of poverty and save lives.
- Progress to Date – Over \$105,000 = 30 wells. 12 wells completed. Dick's trip to Ethiopia.

Ask the following question of the group and respond to answers. Make sure the following answers are talked about. With access to fresh, clean water, how can the cycle of poverty be changed?

- Can you envision living this life?

Tell Stories

A Story... A farmer named Nigussie spent many long hours in the heat plowing the fields and harvesting his crops. He then walked home to his wife and asked her for a drink to quench his thirst. Though it wasn't much, he gulped every drop of water he could. That sleepless night he had to repeatedly go outside due to diarrhea and to vomit from the water he drank. He had to be carried to the hospital 20 miles away, but it was all to no avail because Nigussie died before receiving any medical treatment.

Another Story... A not so uncommon occurrence for mothers is taking their children to the local clinic to have leeches removed from their throats. Most villages draw water from springs, which are in most cases not protected, and several children suffer from all kinds of diseases they get from the spring water as there is no alternative. Livestock, draught animals and cattle all share the same water so children are always sick and have to be taken to a nearby clinic time after time.

Scripture and Discussion #1

As a group, ask the following questions, reading the referenced scripture passages. You can read them, ask for volunteers to read them, or take turns reading them. Take time to discuss. As a leader, reference the information found in parentheses.

What does the Bible say about water? What are uses of water in history and today?

- What are the references and uses for water in the Bible? List as many as you can think of.
 - Drinking – For people and animals. (Gen 24:14-26)
 - Washing (Gen 43:24; John 13:5-14)
 - Baptism (Mt 3:11)
 - Symbol of Life (John 4:14)

Application #1

Discuss the following questions as a group. Delve for details. Make the answers concrete. Apply this study to your lives.

- How do I use water in my life?
- What experiences have you had when your water has not be available? Storm, service interrupted, etc.? Travel in countries where you could not drink the water? How did lack of fresh water affect my life? Be specific.

Scripture and Discussion #2

As a group, ask the following questions, reading the referenced scripture passages. You can read them, ask for volunteers to read them, or take turns reading them. Take time to discuss. As a leader, reference the information found in parentheses.

Read Genesis 26:12-25 about Isaac's wells.

- Discuss the importance of wells in this passage.
- What type of well are you envisioning? What do you see in your mind's eye? (Hand-dug, lined with stone, buckets on ropes.)
- Why did the Philistines stop up Abraham's wells? (They envied him. Perhaps they were afraid of him. Obviously, God's covenant promises with Abraham were already being fulfilled. God's presence was seen as a threat by others.)
- To what impact? (Isaac, his family, his servants, his animals had no water.)
- Why did Isaac reopen the old wells? Why did he dig new wells? (Perhaps to honor his father. To keep his family, his servants, his animals alive.)
- What happened with the new wells? (Quarrels over the water. In arid regions, disputes over water rights and pastureland were common.)
- What was the importance of having a family well? (A place of life and security. A place to gather. Necessary. If you have a well, you don't have to fight with others about using their well.)
- How do these wells fit into the history of the Old Testament? (This section of history happened after Sarah and Abraham had died. Isaac, Abraham's son, was living among the Philistines during a famine. – Isaac's son was Jacob. Jacob's Well still exists and can be visited outside of Jerusalem. Scholars are unsure if Jacob dug this well or simply used it and inherited it from his father. Is this the well the Samaritan woman visits in the next reading? Some believe it may be.)

Read John 4:4-26 about the Samaritan woman at the well and Living Water.

- What type of well are you envisioning? What do you see? (The same as above.)

INTRO

Introduce self and organization. Thank group for attendance and interest.

Preview what you are going to do.

- Discuss the need for clean, safe water – see a DVD, hear about the current situation, look to what the Bible says about water.
- Discuss the solution for providing clean, safe water – see more of the DVD, hear about Water to Thrive, look to what the Bible says about serving others.
- Presentation time, questions welcome, discussion time.

THE NEED

Show DVD

Show the first half of the DVD on the need for fresh water. Pause before Donna begins speaking.

Opening Prayer

Thank God for the gathering. Praise his goodness.

Ask God... to bless our learning this morning and open our hearts to the messages shared in His scripture. to help us understand the needs of God's people in other areas of our same world, opening your heart and mind to his message and his call. Ask God to lift our hearts through the message of how we can serve and make a difference. to bless the poor and needy who labor each day to simply survive. Comfort them and protect them. to reveal to you His desires for your next step.

Water to Thrive: The Facts

Review this information with the group. Read it aloud or have others in the group read it aloud. Take time to reflect after each statement.

A broad look at some issues facing our world today

- A person dies every three seconds simply because they are in poverty and live with disease and starvation.
- Education, basic health services, and clean water – fundamental necessities for life – remain unknown to hundreds of millions of God's people.
- Over one billion people worldwide lack access to clean water, and over 2.4 billion lack access to proper sanitation.
- Every year over two million children die from diseases related to poor water quality or sanitation.
- The recommended basic water requirement per person per day is 13 gallons – which include drinking, cooking, and basic hygiene. In Gambia (a small country in western Africa on the Atlantic coast), the average person uses only 1.2 gallons. In Ethiopia, 10 gallons is often expected to last a family of 8 for at least 2 days. That's just over ½ a gallon per person per day. In the US the average person uses 75-150 gallons per day, depending on where you get your statistics.

Specifically looking at Ethiopia, how does lack of access to clean water impact lives?

- In rural Ethiopia, only one person in 3 has access to clean, fresh water
- Millions of women and children are forced each day to spend hours collecting and carrying water
- 52 gallons of water for a family of four (the recommended requirement) weighs 430 pounds.
- For women, gathering water can consume their lives – robbing them of the time needed to properly support their families.
- For children, time spent gathering water reduces their chance for education, keeping them trapped in a cycle of poverty.
- The lack of a sustainable water source reduces food production for crops and livestock.
- 50% of the rural population suffers from water-borne disease.
- One Ethiopian child in ten dies before their 5th birthday; 50% of those die from diarrhea.

Discuss the following questions.

- What statement most impacted you?



Water to Thrive – Lutherans Dig Deep

A guided **one-session** study of the water crisis in today's world and our role as Christians in serving God's people.

The Need

The water crisis around the world, and especially in Ethiopia, is very real. Millions of rural Ethiopians do not have access to clean water. Women and children spend hours every day collecting water for their families. The labor of walking for the water and carrying it, beats down their bodies. Impurities and disease in the water sicken their bodies. The time requirement doesn't allow necessary time for proper family care and education. And the cycle of poverty continues.

The Solution

Average cost to dig a fresh water well to serve up to 500 rural Ethiopians is \$3,500. Access to fresh water frees their bodies from toil and sickness. Fresh water access also provides the time and opportunity for education, family care and community advancement. Their lives are changed forever. Each donation goes directly to changing lives through clean water. Digging well and providing for others is an ancient Scriptural call. We are giving the gift of life.

My Role

Look at the abundance that surrounds us. Most of us do not know what it means to be without basic needs. We have been called by God to care for His children, to feed His sheep. With a donation, even out of our abundance, we can make a difference in the lives of people less fortunate. If we made minor changes or sacrifices in our spending habits, what a difference it would make in the lives of our neighbors! We each have a capacity to make a difference.

During this study, we will...

- Seek to understand the impact that clean, fresh water has the lives of people across the world.
- Take a deeper look at the opportunity for making a large impact and sustainable change.
- Ask how I can be part of the solution and what impact I can have on the cycle of poverty.

Materials: DVD, Maps, Photos, Jerry Cans w/ropes, Pledge Forms, Brochures, Handouts, Bibles