

Call for action:

Stand up and directly ask participants to act to impact the lives of others. Be real and show your passion. Don't be forceful or abrasive or try to guilt participants into giving. But authentically reach out to participants to join you in changing lives.

Your verbiage could resemble this...

“This project is completely do-able and realistic. We can change thousands of lives! There are no more excuses. We are presented with an opportunity to give, to make a difference in the lives of God's children. I, for one, am going to respond. And I want you to join me. Imagine what we can accomplish together!”

Here you can include how you plan to respond and what you plan to give, or you can have another participant stand up and share their story. Include why you are giving and what moved your heart. Get personal here. Share your passion.

“So I ask now that you prayerfully consider a gift to Water to Thrive. If this ministry has touched you, make an impact! What can you commit to give? Make that commitment!”

“Pledge cards are available here tonight. I ask that you prayerfully complete the card and respond to this need. Give what you can out of your abundance and out of your sacrifice. Imagine how much we could give if we drank only clean water for a week!”

Instruct participants on how to turn in pledge forms and/or donations. Let them know if you want them turned in to you or if you'd like them mailed directly to Water to Thrive.

Suggestion: If you have a core team working with you, have them spread out during the presentation. If one of them is seated at each table, they can answer questions as they come up and gently challenge participants in their giving.

Note: Avoid using the word “fundraising” in your ask. Present an opportunity to give and for participants to respond to a need out of love. Don't simply ask for money. This is so much more than that.

Celebrate:

Thank participants for their gifts. Let them know what will happen next, when they will know the total amount raised, etc.

Close with prayer:

- Praise God for opening your eyes to the needs of the world.
- Thank God for all the gifts and blessings he has provided you.
- Ask God to bless those in need around the world.
- Ask God how you can help those in need around the world and how you should best serve His children.
- Praise God for His love, His goodness and His grace.

- 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. (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.)
- It is our responsibility to obey God, and to carry out the work to be done.

Scriptures and Discussion:

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. 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 that “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 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?

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?

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:

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?

Week Three: My Role as Servant

During this study, we will...

- Ask how I can be part of the solution.
- Understand the impact that I can have on the cycle of poverty and health.
- Take a deeper look at service opportunities.

A Brief Study:

We each are called upon by God to make a difference and to serve the poor. We each have a capacity to make a difference. We will discuss the ways in which we are equipped to make an impact. We will look at ourselves and begin to determine our personal capacity for service.

Materials: DVD, Map, Bibles, Matching Forms, Pledge Forms, Brochures. Optional full jerry cans, clean and dirty water.

Preparation: Find and prepare an individual to share their commitment to making a difference through Water to Thrive. Invite them to share why and how they are contributing. This will happen later during the study.

Open with prayer

Ask God to allow our hearts and minds to remain open to continued growth in our ability to serve. Ask God to reveal to you directly His desires for your next step in your development of being a servant to His people. Ask God to help you remain open to the ways in which he calls you to serve

Remember the Need and the Solution:

Review the previous two lessons. **Ask the group to share what they remember about the lesson.**

Make sure the following points are made.

- 1) One in ten rural Ethiopians have access to fresh water.
- 2) One in ten rural Ethiopians die before the age of five.
- 3) Fifty percent of rural Ethiopians suffer from water borne disease.
- 4) The responsibility of gathering water robs women of time to care for their families and children of an education.
- 5) Lack of access to fresh water keeps millions locked in a cycle of poverty.
- 6) We are called to serve God's children around the world.
- 7) On average \$3500 provides a fresh water well for a minimum of 400 rural Ethiopians.
- 8) Approximately \$7 provides access to fresh water for a single Ethiopian, changing that life forever.
- 9) All operating and implementation costs are being underwritten by Thriven and A Glimmer of Hope Foundation. 100% of donations go directly to Ethiopia and the project to be implemented.
- 10) Fresh, clean water allows for clean hygiene, stronger bodies, less water borne disease, and time for family care, education and community improvement.
- 11) This holistic approach includes education, training, management and local water councils.
- 12) These wells break the cycle of poverty and save lives.

Review the activities completed in the previous lessons.

- Water Usage
- Water Walk and Water Math

DVD

Watch the Water to Thrive DVD. After the previous two studies, something new is bound to jump out at participants.

Ask the following.

- What did you notice this time that you did not notice before?
- How did this video impact you differently than the first time you saw it? Why?

The Call to Service:

- Service is the *doing* of good works, as God leads and directs through the power of the Holy Spirit.

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?
- How does the water and community available at the well affect my life?
- How would my life suffer without these?

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 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.

- Participants pick up jugs of water, varying in size from 1 to 5 gallons.
- Walk a set distance and calculate how many times they would have to walk it to make a mile.
- Everyone walks with water.

Faith Reference: 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.

Discuss the activity:

- Are you able to better empathize with conditions in rural Ethiopia after this activity?
- Was this easier or more difficult than you thought it was going to be?
- Why do you think the women and girls are usually the ones gathering and carrying the water?
- Our jugs are filled with clean waters. Theirs are filled with dirty, disease-contaminated water. How would you feel to work so hard carrying dirty water?
- How does the walk for water affect the women and girls that must participate?

Water Math (Optional)

Ask the following questions.

- How much water does the average American use per day? (75-150 gallons per person)
- How much water does the average impoverished person use per day? (6 gallons per family)

A woman living in Ethiopia needs 8 gallons of water from a small stream each day. Eight gallons is the bare minimum she needs each day for drinking, cooking and bathing her and her family. Each day she walks 1 mile to the river and back home again.

- If the woman can only carry 2 gallons at a time, how far will she have to walk to gather all 8 gallons? How much weight will she be carrying each trip? (1 gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.)
- If the woman can carry 4 gallons at a time, how far will she have to walk? How much weight will she be carrying each trip?
- When the woman is sick, she sends her daughter to collect the water. The daughter can only carry 1 gallon per trip. How far will she be walking? How long do you estimate this will take?

Let's assume you, an average American, use the lower end of the average – 75 gallons per day.

- How much does that weigh?
- How far would you have to walk carrying how much weight?

We have such an abundance!

Application

- What impacted you most from this study?
- How can you make a difference in the lives of those without water?
- How are we called to serve? Specifically, how are you called to serve?

Close with prayer:

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

The Location: Why Ethiopia?

- There is an acute need that these people cannot meet on their own.
- Africa is among the poorest nations in the world.
- Ethiopia has the densest population of Lutherans in Africa.
- There are over 4.8 million Lutherans in Ethiopia.

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.
- For as little as \$3500, we can provide a water well serving 300-500 rural Ethiopians
- Just \$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.

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?

- 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.

Scripture and Discussion

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?
- Why did the Philistines stop up Abraham's wells? To what impact?
- Why did Isaac dig new wells?
- What happened with the new wells?
- What was the importance of having a family well?
- How do these wells fit into the history of the Old Testament? (Isaac was Abraham's son. His son was Jacob. Jacob later dug a well of his own, which still exists and can be visited outside of Jerusalem. Is this the well the Samaritan woman visits in the next reading? Many believe so.)

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?
- What happened around this well on a daily basis?
- What would happen if the well stopped producing?
- How did Jesus use the symbolism of the well to teach the woman?
- What did the well provide for the woman, physically and spiritually?
- What did the woman do afterward? Shared what Jesus gave her.
- What are we called to do? How does this story impact you?

Session Two: The Solution

During this study, we will...

- Understand the impact that access to clean, fresh water has on the cycle of poverty and health.
- Take a deeper look at Ethiopia and the opportunity for making a large impact and sustainable change.

A Brief Study: Water to Thrive provides fresh water for needy people in Ethiopia. Each donation goes directly to changing lives through clean water. Digging wells and providing for others is an ancient Scriptural call.

Materials: Map, Bibles, Photos of wells and photos of stagnant water, Containers full of water, varying from 1 gallon to 5 gallons, Optional calculator

Optional Activity

When participants arrive, have two types of water displayed and available for them. One clean and pure. The other dirty and stagnant. These can be in pitchers or in water bottles. Either way, label them to make sure no one actually drinks the dirty water. But have it there as a visible reminder of the water that others do drink.

Open with prayer

Ask God to bless the poor and needy who labor each day to simply survive. Ask God to bless your learning this day, 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.

Remember the Need

Review week one's lesson. **Ask the group to share what they remember about the lesson.**

Make sure the following points are made.

- 1) One in ten rural Ethiopians have access to fresh water.
- 2) One in ten rural Ethiopians die before the age of five.
- 3) Fifty percent of rural Ethiopians suffer from water borne disease.
- 4) The responsibility of gathering water robs women of time to care for their families and children of an education.
- 5) Lack of access to fresh water keeps millions locked in a cycle of poverty.
- 6) We are called to serve God's children around the world.

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.

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.

Who is Water to Thrive?

- A faith-based organization seeking to ease some of the pain and suffering in the world through the gift of clean water.
- Grew out of Triumphant Love Lutheran Church in Austin, TX, where members were moved to huge response by the water crisis in Ethiopia.

- 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?
 - What does God desire for us to do?
- What are your thoughts on serving God’s people of the World?

Application

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.
- How can I re-evaluate my concept of service? Neighbor?
- How can I become more involved in a life of service? In what ways is the Lord challenging you to become a more active servant?

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.

- What statement most impacted you?
- Can you envision living this life?

Water Usage Activity

Look at your personal water usage compared to how much water Ethiopians use. List it.

- How do you and your family use water?
- What are your top uses?
- What would you do without toilets? Washing machines? Running water in your home? How would your daily life change without access to clean water?

Imagine there is no running water in your home. Your family will only be able to get water from a well that is located two miles from your home. You have to walk to the well and collect your water.

- How much water will you need? (Figure 5 gallons per person, minimum.)
- How will you and your family bring the needed water home?
- What containers will you use? How much will the containers weight? (1 gallon of water weighs 8.34 pounds.)
- Who will gather the water? When?

Scripture and Discussion

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.

Discussion Topic #1: What does the Bible say about water? What are uses of water in history and today?

- Read **Genesis 21:14-19**
 - What is the importance of water?
 - How does God provide?
- 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)

Discussion Topic #2: Cultivating the Servant in Each of Us:

- What does the Bible say about service?
 - Read John 13:1-17 (Jesus washing the disciples' feet. We serve each other in life.)
 - Read Mark 9:30-40 (Greatest is the least. First shall be last.)
- How do these passages speak to you?
- What is the difference between charity and justice?
 - Charity is an act that responds to the broken and sinful nature of humanity by helping people in need. Isaiah calls us to charity: "If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom shall be like the noonday... You shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of the streets to dwell in" (Isaiah 58:10-12). Charity is a temporary response to human need.
 - Justice is an act that seeks to change the broken and sinful conditions that create human need in the first place. The prophet Amos, building on the long prophetic tradition of Israel, calls us to these kinds of acts when he says: "Let justice roll down like the waters and righteousness, like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:24). Justice is a permanent solution to human need.
- What has that to say for you? What position do you want to take in solving the problems of poverty, disease and death? Does it change your thinking? What actions do you want to do?)

Discussion Topic #3: The Definition of "Neighbor"

- How do we define neighbor?
 - Read Luke 10:25-37 (Good Samaritan)
 - "Go and do likewise." What does this mean to me?
 - Who is your neighbor? Who do you want to be your neighbor?
 - How is this a very difficult commandment?

Session One: The Need

During this study, we will...

- Develop an understanding of world poverty and the world water crisis.
- Cultivate our hearts to embrace our role as Christians in serving God's people.
- Discuss the concept of our "neighbor."

A Brief Study: The water crisis around the world, and especially in Ethiopia, is very real. Lack of clean water negatively impacts the lives of millions of people. Scripture describes water as necessary for the sustenance and cleansing of all life, physically and spiritually. As servants of God, we are called to serve our neighbors across the world. God's needy children are our neighbors.

Materials: DVD, Map, Lyrics to "He's got the whole world in His hands," Bibles, Handout and/or Take-Homes, Optional calculator.

Optional Activity

Serve pretzels or some other dry food, and do not offer beverages. Turn the water off in the bathroom and see what happens when you can't flush the toilet or wash your hands. Do something small to get people noticing water.

Open with prayer

Ask God to bless our learning this morning and open our hearts to the messages shared in His scripture. Ask God to help us understand the needs of God's people in other areas of our same world.

DVD & Map

Show the DVD on the need for fresh water. Refer to a map on the wall or in handouts to show where Ethiopia is located.

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.
- Over 10,000 children die each day due to AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria.
- 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 the Gambia (a small country in western Africa on the Atlantic coast), the average person uses only 1.2 gallons. In the US the average person uses 132 gallons.

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.



Water to Thrive – Lutherans Dig Deep

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

Session One – 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.

Session Two – 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.

Session Three – 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.