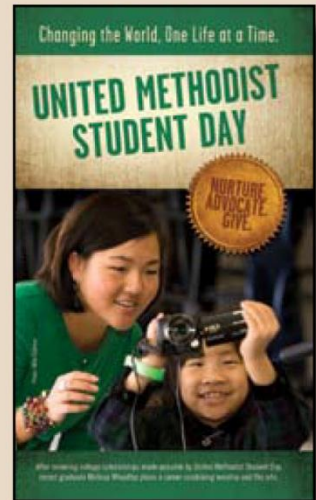
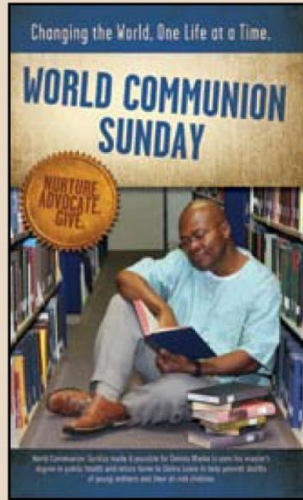
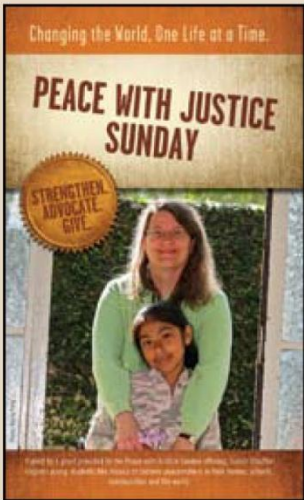
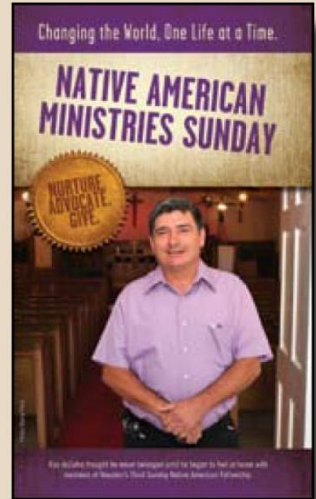
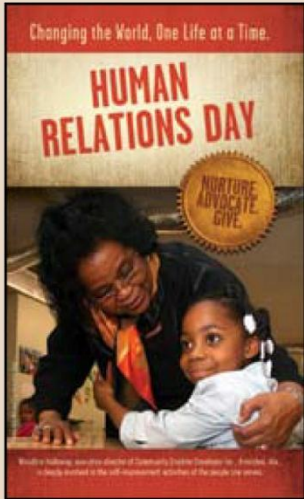


CHANGING THE WORLD, ONE LIFE AT A TIME

CHURCHWIDE SPECIAL SUNDAYS WITH OFFERINGS LEADER'S GUIDE



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Human Relations Day

Date: Sunday before the birthday observance of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

- Jan. 18, 2009
- Jan. 17, 2010
- Jan. 16, 2011
- Jan. 15, 2012

Your church may support Human Relations Day all year long.

Purpose

- “This Sunday occurs during Epiphany, the season of manifesting God’s light to the world. Human Relations Day calls the Church to recognize the right of all God’s children in realizing their potential as human beings in relationship with each other. The purpose of the day is to further the development of better human relations.” (Par. 263.1, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Contributions strengthen United Methodist outreach to communities in the United States and Puerto Rico and encourage social justice and work with at-risk youth.

History

The 1972 General Conference established Human Relations Day to promote support for Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services and Police-Community Relations programs. Begun in 1968, the three programs had received support from the churchwide Bishop’s Fund for Reconciliation. In 1989, the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program replaced the Police-Community Relations Program to respond to the growing population of youth offenders and their need for creative redirection.

Your generous contributions support:

- Community Developers Program, related to the General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM) – 57 percent of the offering. Persons work in racial- and ethnic-minority communities in the United States and Puerto Rico.
- United Methodist Voluntary Services, GBGM – 33 percent. A multiracial network of grassroots social justice organizations provides vital outreach.
- Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program, affiliated with the General Board of Church and Society – 10 percent. Christ-centered projects give teenagers a chance to succeed.

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$689,047, an average of only 8.7 cents per U.S. member (based on membership total 7,899,173).

One Great Hour of Sharing

Date: Fourth Sunday in Lent

- March 22, 2009
- March 14, 2010
- April 3, 2011
- March 18, 2012

Your church may support One Great Hour of Sharing all year long.

Purpose

- "Lent is the season of repentance, self-examination, and awareness of the hurts of the people of the world. One Great Hour of Sharing calls the Church to share the goodness of life with those who hurt." (Par. 263.2, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Gifts provide refuge and relief to some of the world's most vulnerable people during times of distress.

History

In 1946, One Great Hour of Sharing began as a special effort of the Episcopal Church. In 1949, the observance became ecumenical. Originally, during one special worship hour on one date, people of faith contributed over and above their regular offerings. Today different denominations celebrate One Great Hour of Sharing on various dates, but the cooperative spirit remains.

Your generous contributions . . .

To One Great Hour of Sharing lay the foundation of all of UMCOR's work by covering the costs of doing business. This means all gifts designated to specific programs can go 100% to those programs because UMCOR's basic expenses are covered.

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$3,212,946, an average of only 40.7 cents per U.S. member.

Native American Ministries Sunday

Date: Third Sunday of Easter (two weeks after Easter)

- April 26, 2009
- April 18, 2010
- May 8, 2011
- April 22, 2012

Your church may support Native American Ministries Sunday all year long.

Purpose

- “This Sunday serves to remind the Church of the gifts and contributions made by Native Americans to our society.” (Par. 263.6, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Offerings educate Native American seminarians, plant Native American churches and cultivate Native American outreach.

History

In a petition to the 1988 General Conference, the Native American International Caucus proposed Native American Awareness Sunday, and delegates approved the new churchwide Special Sunday with offering. The 2000 General Conference changed the name of the observance to Native American Ministries Sunday.

Your generous contributions support:

- The annual conference keeps 50 percent of the receipts to develop and strengthen Native American ministries within the conference. The conference committee on Native American ministry administers these funds. If no Native American ministries exist within the conference, this portion of the offering expands the number of target cities in the Native American Urban Initiative (General Board of Global Ministries).
- The other 50 percent of the net receipts provides scholarships for Native Americans attending United Methodist schools of theology and other schools approved by the University Senate of The United Methodist Church (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry).

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$401,127, an average of only 5.1 cents per U.S. member.

Please note

Contact your conference committee on Native American ministry for conference-specific information. According to *The Book of Discipline* 2008 (Par. 654), “Every local church at charge conference shall designate by nomination and election a minimum of one person per charge (without regard to race or ethnic origin) or a designated member of an established church committee to represent the need for better awareness of Native American contributions in the local church.” Make sure your congregation elects someone for this important role.

Peace with Justice Sunday

Date: First Sunday after Pentecost

- June 7, 2009
- May 30, 2010
- June 19, 2011
- June 3, 2012

Your church may support Peace with Justice Sunday all year long.

Purpose

- “Pentecost celebrates the outpouring of the Holy Spirit calling for God’s shalom. Peace with justice witnesses to God’s demand for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world.” (Par. 263.5, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Contributions enable United Methodists to work for peace, love and compassion for God’s children everywhere.

History

The 1980 General Conference created a churchwide Peace with Justice program assigned to the General Board of Church and Society. By 1984, peace with justice ministries had sprung up throughout the church. The 1984 General Conference voted to support the program with an annual offering on World Order Sunday, established half a century ago to build recognition and support for the work of the United Nations. The 1988 General Conference established Peace with Justice Sunday as the first Sunday after Pentecost to give churches a single, more convenient date for the offering and a name that clearly identifies the ministries it supports.

Each annual conference has a Peace with Justice coordinator who networks with coordinators in other conferences across the connection. Peace with Justice coordinators meet annually for spiritual growth, empowerment and program resourcing. To contact your conference coordinator, go to www.umc-gbcs.org. Click on “Peace with Justice”; then click on “Peace with Justice Coordinators.”

Your generous contributions support:

- The annual conference keeps 50 percent of the receipts for Peace with Justice ministries in the conference. The conference board of church and society or an equivalent structure administers these funds.
- The remaining 50 percent is used for Peace with Justice ministries related to the General Board of Church and Society.

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$290,469, an average of only 3.7 cents per U.S. member.

World Communion Sunday

Date: First Sunday of October

- Oct. 4, 2009
- Oct. 3, 2010
- Oct. 2, 2011
- Oct. 7, 2012

Your church may support World Communion Sunday all year long.

Purpose

- “World Communion Sunday calls the Church to be the catholic inclusive church.” (Par. 263.3, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Gifts provide college scholarships for racial- and ethnic-minority students in the United States and for international students.

History

In 1940 the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America established World-wide Communion Sunday – originally a Presbyterian observance – as a global, interdenominational event. Prompted by the impact of World War II, the Methodist Church received an offering on this Sunday for the Fellowship of Suffering and Service. It aided the work of the Methodist Committee on Overseas Relief (now the United Methodist Committee on Relief), the Commission on Chaplains and the Commission on Camp Activities. In 1971, The United Methodist Church changed the name of the observance to World Communion Sunday and redistributed the offering to support the Crusade Scholarship Program (begun in 1944), the Ethnic Minority Scholarship Program and the Division of Chaplains and Related Ministries. In 1980, Chaplains and Related Ministries was moved to World Service funding, but the World Communion Sunday offering continued to assist racial- and ethnic-minority persons pursuing various avenues of ministry. The 2008 General Conference changed the name of Crusade Scholars to World Communion Scholars.

Your generous contributions support:

- World Communion Scholarships, related to the General Board of Global Ministries – 50 percent of the offering. These are for international and U.S. (racial- and ethnic-minority) graduate students. At least half of the annual amount goes to ministries beyond the United States.
- Ethnic Scholarship Program, affiliated with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM) – 35 percent of offering. This benefits undergraduate students.
- Ethnic In-Service Training Program, GBHEM – 15 percent of offering. Racial- and ethnic-minority persons seeking second careers in church-related vocations receive these scholarships.

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$1,028,865, an average only 13 cents per U.S. member.

United Methodist Student Day

Date: Last Sunday in November

- Nov. 29, 2009
- Nov. 28, 2010
- Nov. 27, 2011
- Nov. 25, 2012

Your church may support United Methodist Student Day all year long.

Purpose

- “United Methodist Student Day calls the Church to support students as they prepare for life in uniting faith with knowledge.” (Par. 263.4, *The Book of Discipline* 2008)
- Offerings provide scholarships and loans to deserving United Methodist students.

History

In 1866, a special fund was established for the advanced education of Sunday school children and the educational preparation of persons for the ministry and missionary service. The 1940 General Conference established Methodist Student Day with a churchwide offering. The 1968 Uniting Conference continued this connectional student-aid program to be funded by the United Methodist Student Day offering. Dates for taking the offering have changed through the years.

Your generous contributions support:

- United Methodist scholarships and the U.M. Student Loan Fund, administered by the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry (GBHEM).
- Annual conferences participating in the Rebate Program may award one or more merit scholarships to United Methodist students. Participating conferences may award scholarships to U.M. students who reside in the conference and who attend or will attend a U.M.-related college or university.

Receipts

The 2008 offering totaled \$554,252, an average of only 7 cents per U.S. member.

Sermon Starters

The Revised Common Lectionary readings for each Special Sunday often provide natural segues into a sermon. Here are the readings for 2010. They are from the New Revised Standard Version and The Message.

Human Relations Day – Jan. 17, 2010

- Isaiah 62:1-5 – “You’ll get a brand-new name straight from the mouth of God. You’ll be a stunning crown in the palm of God’s hand, a jeweled gold cup held high in the hand of your God.”
- Psalm 36:5-10 (UMH 771) – “How precious is your steadfast love, O God! All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.”
- 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 – “Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful!”
- John 2:1-11 – “Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

One Great Hour of Sharing – March 14, 2010

- Joshua 5:9-12 – “The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.”
- Psalm 32 (UMH 766) – “God-affirmers find themselves loved every time they turn around. Celebrate God. Sing together – everyone! All you honest hearts, raise the roof!”
- 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 – “We’re Christ’s representatives. God uses us to persuade men and women to drop their differences and enter into God’s work of making things right between them. We’re speaking for Christ himself now: Become friends with God; he’s already a friend with you.”
- Luke 5:1-3, 11b-32 – “Jesus heard about it and spoke up, ‘Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I’m here inviting outsiders, not insiders – an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out.’”

Native American Ministries Sunday – April 18, 2010

- Acts 9:1-6 (7-20) – “And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and his sight was restored. Then he got up and was baptized, and after taking some food, he regained his strength.”
- Psalm 30 (UMH 762) – “You did it: you caged wild lament into whirling dance; you ripped off my black mourning band and decked me with wildflowers. I’m about to burst with song; I can’t keep quiet about you. God, my God, I cannot thank you enough.”
- Revelation 5:11-14 – “Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, singing, ‘To the one seated on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever.’”
- John 21:1-19 – “After breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?’ ‘Yes, Master, you know I love you.’ Jesus said, ‘Feed my lambs.’”

Peace with Justice Sunday – May 30, 2010

- Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 – “God sovereignly made me – the first, the basic – before he did anything else. . . . Day after day I was there, with my joyful applause, always enjoying his company, delighted with the world of things and creatures, happily celebrating the human family.”
- Psalm 8 (UMH 743) – “When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?”
- Romans 5:1-5 – “Suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”
- John 16:12-15 – “But when the Friend comes, the spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is.”

World Communion Sunday – Oct. 3, 2010

- Lamentations 1:1-6 – “How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! How like a widow she has become, she that was great among the nations! She that was a princess among the provinces has become a vassal.”
- Psalm 137 (UMH 852) – “If I ever forget you, Jerusalem, let my fingers wither and fall off like leaves. Let my tongue swell and turn black if I fail to remember you, if I fail, O dear Jerusalem, to honor you as my greatest.”
- 2 Timothy 1:1-14 – “So keep at your work, this faith and love rooted in Christ, exactly as I set it out for you. It’s as sound as the day you first heard it from me. Guard this precious thing placed in your custody by the Holy Spirit who works in us.”
- Luke 17:5-10 – “You don’t need *more* faith. There is no ‘more’ or ‘less’ in faith. If you have a bare kernel of faith, say the size of a poppy seed, you could say to this sycamore tree, ‘Go jump in the lake,’ and it would do it.”

United Methodist Student Day – Nov. 28, 2010

- Isaiah 2:1-5 – “Come, let us go up to the mountain of God, . . . that we may be taught the ways of God and may walk in God’s paths.”
- Psalm 122 (UMH 845) – “For the sake of my relatives and friends I will say, ‘Peace be within you.’ For the sake of the house of . . . our God, I will seek your good.”
- Romans 13:11-14 – “Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably. . . . Put on the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Matthew 24:36-44 – “Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.”

Do you need an idea for a sermon on giving? Here is a sermon starter.

Growing in the Grace of Giving

"Grace, because God is putting everything together again through the Messiah, invites us into life – a life that goes on and on and on, world without end."

--Romans 5:21, The Message

Here are five levels of giving in ascending order:

1. **Self-benefit:** "I give because I like this church. My family likes the music, programming and youth ministries." This giving level includes many "I's" and "my's."
2. **Gratitude:** "I give because I recognize God as the source of my blessings." Out of a sense of giftedness, we give with thanksgiving to God.
3. **Spiritual faithfulness:** "I have decided to give a proportion or percentage of my income or resources as a practice and response of faithfulness." At this level, we continue to grow as Christian disciples and desire to be good stewards, trustees or managers of that with which we are entrusted. A step forward in proportionate giving is the decision to become a tithing Christian, giving at least 10 percent of our income.
4. **Spiritual vision:** "I envision what giving can make possible, the opportunities at hand and the differences that can be made." We see what God can do and what can be accomplished through our gifts. We can excel in the grace of giving!
5. **Extravagant love:** "Love made me do it." This is, perhaps, the highest level of giving. Like the woman in Mark's gospel who poured an extremely expensive bottle of perfume worth more than a year's wages over the feet of Jesus, we give at this level because Scripture tells us to love God with our whole heart!

Questions for prayerful consideration:

- At what level of giving would you like to be?
- At what level of giving is God prompting you to be?
- What have you done or given simply because you are extravagantly in love with God?
- How has growing in the grace of generous giving paralleled your overall experience of spiritual growth?

--Adapted, with permission, from the Nashville [Tenn.] Area United Methodist Foundation Web site

Do you need an idea for a sermon on giving? Here is a sermon starter.

Generosity

*"Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor."
--Proverbs 22:9, NRSV*

- God models generous giving for the Christian. God's Spirit within us forms us as generous people. Through grace, generosity becomes a quality of our heart, spirit and actions. Generosity is the fruit of the Spirit, a product of our spiritual development and growth in grace.
- The Christian's need to give generously is part of spiritual growth. Giving for the Christian, properly understood, is a spiritual enterprise, a matter of the heart. As maturing Christians, we learn the spiritual value of generosity. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9:7, "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." As developing Christians grow in generosity, they discover the joy and "blessedness" of giving. Because of our giving, well-funded Christian ministries transform lives, meet human needs, and produce thanksgiving and praise to God!
- Years ago, Hilbert Berger said a person's attitude about giving and generosity is one of the best and most reliable indicators of spiritual health.
- The generous use of possessions is a key New Testament theme and a prominent characteristic of a maturing Christian disciple. Generous living and giving flow naturally from hearts made new by God's Spirit within us. Martin Luther recommended two conversions, one of the heart and one of the purse!
- The opposite of generosity is self-centeredness that seeks self-benefit and self-preservation. Many seek to hold tightly to their resources in an attempt to secure their life and future. Others spend excessively or frivolously, even beyond their means, and end up feeling they cannot afford to be generous. They miss the personal enrichment that comes through partnering with God and others to support God's work.

--Adapted, with permission, from the Nashville [Tenn.] Area United Methodist Foundation Web site

Do you need an idea for a sermon on giving? Here are some inspirational words from Scripture.

Inspiration from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*

- “When you happen on someone who’s in trouble or needs help among your people . . . , don’t look the other way pretending you don’t see him. Don’t keep a tight grip on your purse, lend whatever and as much as he needs. Don’t count the cost.” (Deuteronomy 15:7-8)
- “Wicked borrows and never returns; Righteous gives and gives.” (Psalm 37:21)
- “It’s criminal to ignore a neighbor in need, but compassion for the poor – what a blessing!” (Proverbs 14:21)
- “Mercy to the needy is a loan to God, and God pays back those loans in full.” (Proverbs 19:17)
- “Be generous to the poor – you’ll never go hungry; shut your eyes to their needs, and run a gauntlet of curses.” (Proverbs 28:27)
- “If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it.” (Matthew 5:42)
- “You have been treated generously, so live generously.” (Matthew 10:8)
- “One poor widow came up and put in two small coins – a measly two cents. Jesus called his disciples over and said, . . . All the others gave what they’ll never miss; she gave extravagantly what she couldn’t afford – she gave her all’.” (Mark 12:42-44)
- “Give away your life; you’ll find life given back, but not merely given back – given back with bonus and blessing. Giving, not getting, is the way. Generosity begets generosity.” (Luke 6:38)
- “Great gifts mean great responsibilities; greater gifts, greater responsibilities.” (Luke 12:48)
- “God loves it when the giver delights in the giving.” (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- “Every desirable and beneficial gift comes out of heaven.” (James 1:17a)

Human Relations Day

Preparation

Bring plastic keys for baby.*

Greet the children

Good morning! How are you today?

Show the baby keys

Did you ever try to open doors with keys like these when you were little? Do they really work?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Do you have a key to your house or apartment?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Have you ever lost or forgotten your key? What did you do?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Have you ever gone to a friend's house, knocked and no one answered? What did you do?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Sometimes closed "doors" aren't actual doors made of wood but things that keep people from doing their best. And keys aren't the only things that open doors. Sometimes we open doors when we show people we love and care about them. Maybe people don't have enough money for food or clothes. Maybe they don't have somewhere safe in their neighborhood to go after school for help with homework or to play. Maybe they get in trouble at home or at school and no one is around to help them to do what is right.

We have a special offering today to help open doors to success. Do you know what "success" means?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

It means doing a good job or doing your best.

With the money from this special offering called Human Relations Day, we help to open doors to food pantries, clothes closets and community centers where children go to study, play and get an after-school snack. Grownups that care about children and teenagers try to set a good example for them.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, "Knock, and the door will be opened for you." What do you think that means?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

When we give to this special offering, we open doors to success and help our friends and neighbors.

Let us pray: Dear God, sometimes closed doors aren't real doors made of wood but things that keep people from doing their best. Please help us to share with others so we can "open doors." Thank you for your blessings. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Alternate idea: If you cannot find baby keys, bring your house key and invite the children to try to open a nearby door (visible to the congregation) or a locked box. They will find it doesn't work.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Scripture:

"For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat." Isaiah 25:4 NRSV

Supplies:

A pint-size milk carton filled with milk for demonstration one glass several empty milk cartons thoroughly washed

Lesson:

Say: Today we are going to learn what "refuge" means.

Ask: Does anyone want to take a guess?

Say: A refuge is a place of shelter, like a home, or a safe place. Refuge can mean different things to different people. For some, this is a roof over their heads, or it can mean security – knowing that food is on the table. For others, it's having good health care, or an opportunity to go to school or work.

Say: Let's find out how milk can be a refuge. Can you help me?

Ask: Where does milk come from? (Pour some milk into a glass. Someone should say "cows", but you want to emphasize goats as well.)

Ask: Why do we need milk? (Strong bones, teeth, nourishment)

Ask: What types of food can be made with milk? (Someone should say "cheese", "bread", "pancakes.")

Explain: We all need milk to help strengthen our bones and make our bodies healthy. But milk can also provide a family income. In some places, people have to buy a goat in order to get their milk. When they purchase a goat, they sell the milk or sell the cheese they make with milk for income. In this way, milk becomes a refuge, by providing a family with security and better health.

God promises to be a refuge. God promises to take care of us when we need Go the most. In Isaiah 25:4, it says, "For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat."

Sometimes God asks us to help others by bringing them what they need. When we help bring milk to others, we become a refuge to them.

Pass the empty milk containers to the children and explain what they are for:

When you collect coins in these cartons for the One Great Hour of Sharing offering, you help bring refuge to people. Giving to the One Great Hour of Sharing offering makes sure 100 percent of your gifts will go to help those most in need.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for loving us and being a refuge for us by giving us everything we need. Thank you, God, also for letting us be a refuge for others by bringing people the things they need. Help us, God, to see how we can help others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Native American Ministries Sunday

Preparation

Bring an authentic or a homemade dream catcher or a photo of one. (You can Google "dream catcher" to find directions for making a simple dream catcher using a paper plate.)

Greet the children

Good morning! How are you today?

Show the dream catcher

Do you know what this is? What do you call it?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

It is a dream catcher. Why do you suppose we call it a "dream catcher"?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Have you ever had a bad dream? What did you do?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Everyone has a bad dream now and then. Sometimes, dreams are so scary that it is hard to go back to sleep, or maybe you crawl into bed with your mom or dad or big sister or brother.

But we don't just dream at night. Have you ever said or heard, "My dream is to become a great baseball player" or "My dream is to go to college"?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

The Ojibwa (Chippewa) Indians made the first dream catchers. They tied strands in a web around a small round or tear-shaped frame and hung this "dream-catcher" as a charm to protect sleeping children from nightmares. They believed the web would catch the bad dreams.

Today is **Native American Ministries Sunday**. It is a special time to think about Native Americans who dream of a better life. On **Native American Ministries Sunday**, we show people we love them, and we do whatever we can to help them achieve their dreams.

We have a special offering today to help Native Americans make their dreams come true. What does it mean to make a dream come true?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

It means giving people whatever they need to do their very best.

With the money from this special offering called **Native American Ministries Sunday**, we help Native Americans to catch their dreams – dreams of going to seminary to become a pastor, dreams of starting a new church, dreams of reaching out to their neighbors.

When we give to this special offering, we help our Native American friends and neighbors to make their dreams come true.

Let us pray: Dear God, thank you for watching over us and keeping us safe. Teach us to be dream catchers! Help us to help others to dream big – and then to work toward making their dreams come true. Show us how to share with others and to be generous. Thank you for your blessings. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Peace with Justice Sunday

Preparation

Make S'mores, enough for each child to have a taste. All you need are graham crackers, chocolate bars and roasted marshmallows.

Greet the children

Good morning! How are you today?

Distribute the S'mores. If you have babies or toddlers who cannot eat the S'mores, give their treat to their parent or guardian.

Do you know what this is? What do you call it?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

It is a S'more. Have you ever made these on a campout?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

It is fun for us to roast marshmallows over a campfire. It is an adventure. Do you like to make S'mores?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Did you know that in some parts of the world, people do not have stoves or ovens, and cooking over an open flame is the only way to prepare food and to boil water so it is safe to drink?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

What would you do if you met someone who did not have a faucet or a stove in his or her home?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." What does that mean? How can we be peacemakers?

Today is **Peace with Justice Sunday**. It is a special time to think about children and grownups, both in our community and in faraway places where people don't have enough food or water to be healthy – or a way to cook it. On **Peace with Justice Sunday**, we show people we love and care about them, and we do whatever we can to help them to live in peace.

Rick Jost, a missionary in Haiti, shares cheap, easy-to-make solar ovens with people who must walk many miles to get safe water and who do not have kitchens with stoves and other appliances. Is that a way to share Jesus' love?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Jesus also said, "Treat other people as you want to be treated," and that is exactly what "justice" means.

With the money from this special offering on **Peace with Justice Sunday**, we help people to care for God's beautiful world by recycling and doing other things. We help poor people to find food and shelter and to be able to go to the doctor. We do whatever we can to show people how to get along.

Maybe your parent or another grownup will help you make S'mores to share with your friends. If people tell you they like the S'mores, say "thank you." You might even tell them about how Rick Jost helps people in Haiti. If your church has a pantry to feed hungry people in your community, you can be a missionary like Rick by bringing food to share.

Let us pray: Dear God, thank you for watching over us and keeping us safe. Teach us to be peacemakers! We know we don't have to go to faraway places to share with others. Show us how to be kind and generous to people in our neighborhood. Thank you for your blessings. We love you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

World Communion Sunday

Preparation

Bring props that suggest a variety of vocations: an Ace bandage, a textbook, a Bible.

Greet the children

Good morning! How are you today?

Show the props

What do you want to be when you grow up?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Will you just wake up one day when you are a grownup and say, "Today I will be a police officer or a teacher or a ballerina?"

(Allow time for children to respond.)

How will you learn how to be a [name various vocations the children listed]?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

For many jobs, you need to go to college. A young man named Aaron, who lives in California, wants to become a physical therapist so he can help people who get hurt playing sports. Marta, a young woman from Angola – that's in Africa – went to college in the United States, even though she knew very little English. Soon she learned to speak English so well, she taught other students. That's when she decided to become a teacher. And in South Carolina, newcomers to our country and to The United Methodist Church go to an academy – a special school – to learn about the Bible and the church. And guess what? Soon they will become leaders in their churches and their communities.

How are Aaron, Marta and those people in South Carolina alike?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

That's right. They are all students – learning something new so they will be ready to handle a grownup job.

In today's Gospel lesson, parents bring their children to Jesus so he can bless them. The disciples scold the children, but Jesus says, "Don't push these children away." Jesus knows everyone is important. No matter how big or little you are, you can tell others about Jesus.

Today is World Communion Sunday. Does anyone know what "communion" means?

(Allow time for responses. Be prepared for the children to mention Holy Communion.)

Communion is also a word that means we all share together. As Christians, we are a community. (Notice how much those two words sound alike: communion and community.) We are in

communion with other Christians, not just in our own church community here, but also with people in churches all over the world.

Today we have a special offering. The money we give helps people all over the world – people like Aaron and Marta – to go to college or seminary so they can help others.

Let us pray: Dear God, whether we love school or would rather stay home and play all day, we know you want us to learn new things. Help us to study hard and to do our best. And help us to share our money with people around the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

United Methodist Student Day

Preparation

Bring a popular toy, a cell phone and an ad showing an expensive sports car.

Greet the children

Good morning! How are you today?

Show the props

If you could have anything in the whole world, what would it be?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Did you ever want something so much you couldn't stop thinking about it?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Do you always get everything you want?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Sometimes you want things you can't buy at a store – but they still cost a lot of money. One of those things is a chance to go to college. Do you know how much that costs?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

Just as your parents cannot always buy your favorite toy or electronic gadget, they may not have enough money to send you to college. Then what can you do?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

If you get good grades in school, you might get a scholarship to help with the cost. You may borrow money from a bank.

Luckily, The United Methodist Church does what it can to help. Today is United Methodist Student Day. With our special offering, we help pay for scholarships and loans for students who want to go to college so much that's all they think about.

The Bible reading for today is like a prayer: "Make me to know your ways, O God; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me."

What does that mean?

(Allow time for children to respond.)

On United Methodist Student Day, we put extra money in the offering so people can go to college. And when you get older, this special offering may help you to go to college too.

Let us pray: Loving God, thank you for giving us so much, especially Jesus. Help us not to be selfish. Teach us to follow you and to share with others. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Special Sundays Fund-Raising Ideas

Encourage individuals and families in your congregation to try the following ways to change the world, one life at a time, through churchwide Special Sundays with offerings.

1. Avoid the snack-vending machine. Skip candy bars or soft drinks – and the extra calories – and give the money you save to a Special Sunday offering.
2. Contribute an hour's wages to the offering.
3. Create a giving blog. Start a conversation that reflects your thoughts on giving and invite others to share their perspectives. Include reminders about upcoming Special Sundays.
4. Dramatize the parable of the talents (Matthew 25). One month before a Special Sunday, put \$1 in envelopes to distribute to the congregation. Challenge recipients to find ways to multiply this "seed money." Donate the resulting gifts to Special Sundays.
5. Drive past the drive-thru restaurant. Give the cost of a meal to a Special Sunday offering.
6. Encourage everyone to give. Invite children and teens to contribute one week's allowance per year to Special Sundays. See how quickly those "small" donations add up to big dollars.
7. Fast for 24 hours and secure pledges for each hour. Give the money to Special Sundays.
8. Forgo unnecessary expenditures and live frugally. Set a Special Sunday contribution goal.
9. Get creative. Make posters to show how The United Methodist Church spends various amounts of Special Sunday offerings in the United States and around the world. Use magazine pictures to illustrate the posters.
10. Give a penny for each calorie you consume in a day.
11. Give alternative gifts. Instead of giving traditional gifts for birthdays, graduations and other occasions, honor someone by donating to a Special Sunday offering or ministry. Tie your contribution to the honoree's interests: a Human Relations Day gift for a social worker, a United Methodist Student Day gift for a teacher and so forth. Be sure to share the recipient ministry's name and other information with the honoree. Ask others to do the same.
12. Love that love feast? Then use it to make money for mission and ministry. Invite people to bring their favorite main dish for a church potluck and ask adults – as they are able – to give a contribution for their meal. Add the receipts to the Special Sunday offering. Use this as an opportunity to draw attention to the millions of people who face hunger every day.
13. Need dough? Knead dough! Arrange for a church school class or another group to bake several kinds of bread the night before the worship service and sell the fresh loaves to the congregation. Contribute proceeds to the Special Sunday offering.
14. Recycle and earn extra money for Special Sundays. Commonly recycled materials include aluminum cans, foil, glass, paper, plastic and steel.
15. Refrain from grocery shopping for a week, eat the surplus stored in your cupboard and contribute your average weekly food budget.
16. Save a tree. Rather than sending individual holiday cards to church friends, distribute greetings collectively and support Special Sundays as well. Hang a large sheet of poster board decorated with a seasonal design and a greeting. Invite members to sign the "card" and to donate the amount usually spent on cards and stamps. Include a reduced print of the card in your church newsletter. An alternate idea is to send an "e-card."
17. Sell to the highest bidder. Ask people to contribute new or gently used items. Auction the items. Use proceeds to benefit Special Sunday offerings.
18. Set aside a daily donation during the month preceding a Special Sunday. Just 25 cents per day equals \$7.50 for a month of saving. In a 100-member congregation, that would produce \$750 in a month.
19. Sponsor an intergenerational art contest. Ask participants to illustrate through drawings, paintings, collages and other media how the church serves at home and around the world through Special Sunday-related ministries. Have a category for each of the six Special Sundays. Display the entries and give a contribution in honor of the winner for each Special Sunday.

20. Work! Have a workday on which members convert time and energy into money for a Special Sunday offering. Charge for each hour worked or job completed. Advertise in advance that members will be available for a day's labor. Participants can be companions to older adults, care for children, clean houses and garages, do yard work, run errands, walk dogs, wash and detail cars, and do a multitude of other tasks.

A Planning Calendar for Changing the World, One Life at a Time

I'm ready to change the world, one life at a time.
What should I do next?

For best results, reserve at least four weeks to plan and promote each churchwide Special Sunday with offering. Follow the steps listed below and check the box as each task is completed.

Four weeks—and every week—before the Special Sunday

Ask members to pledge money to Special Sunday offerings. Set a fund-raising goal for your local church. Establish a timeline for pledging and collecting. Create a large poster to show progress as money each Special Sunday offering receives money.

Check *Interpreter* (English), *el Intérprete* (Spanish) and *United Methodists in Service* (Korean) as well as the Web site www.umcgiving.org for stories and other information pertaining to Special Sunday-related ministries. Share your findings with your congregation.

Divide responsibilities. In some congregations, one person—the pastor or a specific lay leader—assumes most Special Sunday-related responsibilities. In other churches, a committee shares those tasks. Involve people of all ages.

Emphasize the importance of celebrating Special Sundays. When you tell how the offerings are used, people will begin to recognize how much more we can do together as a connectional church.

List the names of Special Sunday offering recipients from your area. Perhaps someone from your congregation received a United Methodist scholarship or student loan. Share information about recipients' education, career goals and current involvement in ministry.

Obtain statistics related to your congregation's Special Sunday giving. If you already celebrate all six Sundays, continue the good work and strive toward an offering increase. If you do not, allow members the opportunity to nurture God's family by giving to all six offerings.

Pray for God's guidance and for each Special Sunday offering's success. Remember the people who will experience God's love through mission in your community and around the world because of your church's generosity.

Provide Special Sunday-related opportunities for personal growth and learning through Bible studies, classes, discussion groups, ecumenical activities, prayer and public witness across age, gender, race and socioeconomic levels.

Remember \$1 per person per offering makes a big difference! If your congregation does not collect Special Sunday offerings, please put a minimum \$1 per person per offering in your church budget and send that amount to your conference treasurer. One dollar per person per offering would net nearly \$50 million in the United States alone!

Special Sundays Planning Calendar continued

Three weeks before the Special Sunday

__ Contact general boards and agencies to learn about Special Sundays-supported ministries based in your conference. Visit projects to show your congregation how their gifts are used. Tell how the ministries make a difference. Explain what could happen if more resources were available.

__ Cooperate with other churches in getting the word out about Special Sundays, especially the ecumenical One Great Hour of Sharing and World Communion Sunday. Share the costs of Internet, newspaper, radio, television, billboard and transit advertising. Perhaps your annual conference communications office would assist you.

__ Coordinate and sponsor a Special Sunday multicultural mission fair. Begin or conclude with a meal. Focus on ministries supported by United Methodist gifts. Ask classes and organizations to be responsible for booths and displays. Invite resource persons. For free resources, call toll free (888) 346-3862 or go online to www.umcgiving.org/ss

__ Create banners or other artwork to illustrate Special Sunday themes or Scriptures. Begin the worship service with a banner procession or hang banners in the sanctuary.

Two weeks before the Special Sunday

__ Explore opportunities to assist self-help programs and leadership development among people in your community. Organize residents for action around specific concerns. Such activities illustrate the philosophy of Special Sundays.

__ Invite a community developer, a disaster volunteer, a scholarship recipient or another person whose life and work are strengthened by Special Sunday offerings. Through brief “minutes for mission,” speakers can address worshippers, church school classes and other groups.

One week before the Special Sunday

__ Distribute free leaflets/offering envelopes on or before each Special Sunday and display posters prominently. To order, call toll free (888) 346-3862 or go online to www.umcgiving.org/ss

__ Send a letter from the pastor to all members and, perhaps, enclose a leaflet/offering envelope. Set a realistic goal for each offering (at least \$1 per member) and challenge members to reach the goal.

__ Share celebrations of the interfaith Special Sundays—One Great Hour of Sharing and World Communion Sunday—with other congregations. Sponsor joint worship services. Exchange loaves of homemade Communion bread, as well as banners, greetings and prayers.

__ Visit www.umcgiving.org for a specialized Mission Moment and More for each Special Sunday.

On the Special Sunday

__ Deliver sermons highlighting Special Sunday Scriptures, all based on the Revised Common Lectionary.

__ Remit Special Sunday offerings promptly to your conference treasurer. Immediately after each Special Sunday, report to members the total given to each offering. Thank your congregation for their gifts. Announce the next Special Sunday observance.

__ Visit www.umcgiving.org for a specialized Mission Moment and More for each Special Sunday.