

Lesson Plans That Work
The Anniversary of the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti
Lesson Plan for Adults and Older Youth

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9

Theme: Rebuilding a Beacon of Hope in Haiti

Supplies Needed: Have copies of the Bible *or* copies of the scripture passage from Isaiah listed above for everyone to read and reflect upon.

Prepare: You may print and display the photos contained in this lesson plan for your group for a visual focus. You may also print copies of this lesson plan or display it on a screen, so that everyone will have access to the materials and discussion questions. There are video links and resource links at the end of this lesson. Think about how you might incorporate these into your time together – even by printing out a resources sheet for people to take home.

Opening Prayer:

Be with the people of Haiti, O Lord, as they rebuild their lives, their country, their places of learning, and their Church. Guide us today and every day as we seek to serve those who experience natural disasters and who seek to rebuild their lives. In Christ's name, Amen.



Scripture reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Invite participants to take turns reading each of the verses of the Old Testament scripture passage appointed for today, Isaiah 42:1-9.

As your group listens to these words, ask participants to silently reflect on what words or images stand out for them in this passage. As time allows, you might ask participants to share these reflections with the group.

A Story of Rebuilding a Light for a Nation:

We are now in the season of Epiphany – the season of light and the season in which we continue to celebrate Jesus' birth and ministry in the world. Our churches and places of ministry are lights to the world and places of ministry. Think for a moment about all the ministry that happens in your church. What would happen if it was gone?

Please read or re-tell this story in your own words or ask participants to take turns reading this story.

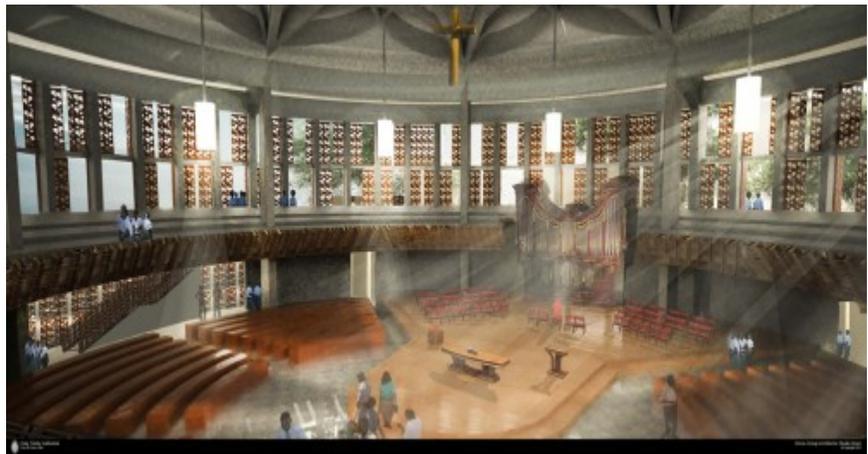
Rebuilding a Light for a Nation

Four years ago today, utter devastation struck the country of Haiti. A magnitude 7 earthquake, lasting 35 seconds - along with two strong aftershocks - left 300,000 people dead, 1.6 million people homeless, and destroyed 80,000 buildings.

Among the buildings left in rubble was the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Port-au-Prince, home to the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Haiti. The devastated Cathedral complex included Holy Trinity Primary School, Secondary School, Music and Trade Schools, the Convent of the Sisters of Saint Margaret, St. Vincent's School for the Handicapped, College Saint Pierre, and numerous other properties owned by the Diocese.

Cultural icons of the Episcopal Church in Haiti were severely damaged as well, as eleven of fourteen historical murals artwork - depicting Bible stories and religious scenes in Haitian motifs - were destroyed. Through this art and by its presence, the Cathedral had served as a spiritual beacon of hope in Port-au-Prince and a symbol of the Church's ministry in one of the poorest countries in the world.

Today, the country strives to rebuild from the devastation of four years ago, challenged by further damage from Hurricane Sandy and chronic issues of poverty and struggles to house, feed, and provide clean water and sanitation for its people. A new cathedral is planned, which will again serve as a beacon of hope and as a prominent symbol of the Church's commitment to serve the people of Haiti. This new cathedral will incorporate surviving elements of the destroyed building and will come equipped with its own power generator, water, and tele-communications capabilities to serve as a safe haven during any future disasters.



The Episcopal Church is helping Haitians to rebuild their everyday lives as well. Through the work of many organizations, lives are being changed. Episcopal Relief & Development is helping with micro-credit loans, sanitation improvements, and fuel for cooking. Many dioceses and congregations have pledged support and have gone to Haiti to help rebuild, to tend to medical needs, and to teach. Individuals, congregations, and diocese have all pledged support to rebuilding the Cathedral and its ministries through the "Haiti: More than a Cathedral" campaign.

As our brothers and sisters in Christ and fellow Episcopalians, the Episcopal Diocese of Haiti seeks our help in rebuilding its Cathedral, its schools, and its nation. As part of our Baptismal Covenant, we are pledged to seek and serve others in need. On this day as we celebrate Jesus' own Baptism, we are asked to truly live out our Baptismal vows to help rebuild new life and a new beacon of hope for the people of Haiti.

Responsive Activities:

Your group may use one or more of these responsive activities, as time and interest allow.

Discussion Questions

- With the loss of its Cathedral, Episcopalians in Haiti lost their place of worship and the people of Haiti lost a primary center of ministry that included schools. How would we respond if we lost our own worship space and center of ministry?
- We are all members of the Body of Christ. We are fellow Episcopalians with 83,700 Haitians and over 100 congregations in Haiti. What duty do we have to reach out to our brothers and sisters in Haiti as they rebuild their Church?
- The Episcopal Diocese of Haiti ministers to 92,000 children in 254 Episcopal schools. How is this “children’s ministry” the same or different from “children’s ministry” in our own faith community?
- If your congregation faced rebuilding of your worship space, what new elements would you incorporate, and why? What could you learn from the example of the rebuilding of the Cathedral in Port-au-Prince? What else would you plan for, other than worship?



Silent Prayer for Haiti

The 2010 earthquake in Haiti lasted 35 seconds. To remember the losses suffered at this time, ask participants to close their eyes and remain silent for 35 seconds as they pray for the people of Haiti as they continue to rebuild their lives, their church, and their nation.

Help Haiti Rebuild

Please ask participants to actively help the people of Haiti rebuild their Cathedral and their lives. Ask for a special offering to support the rebuilding efforts of the Episcopal Church in Haiti. Encourage adult groups and youth groups to sponsor fundraisers or pledge support for the Church in Haiti. Please see the links below for more information on how you can help.

Closing Activity:

Any epiphanies? If time allows, invite each participant to name an epiphany he or she had today.

Ask each participant to pray for the people of Haiti throughout the next week. Invite them to ask God for guidance on how he or she might be a beacon of hope to others during the next week.

A Closing Prayer:

We pray, Lord, for the people of Haiti. Help us to know the people of Haiti as our brothers and sisters in Christ. Be with us all as we rebuild our lives, our church, and our nations. In Christ’s name. Amen.

Videos:

An appeal from the Rev. Joseph Constant, Special Coordinator for Haiti, to help rebuild the once beautiful, now destroyed Holy Trinity Cathedral in downtown Port-Au-Prince.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVUzQBKU9V8>

The Rt. Rev. Jean Zaché Duracin urges us to remember Haiti two years after the devastating earthquake there.

<http://library.episcopalchurch.org/video/haiti-anniversary-reflection>

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/news-and-video#oid=A5YWQxMjrErmpeG6URwoSzUE-1UfhBMp,JhaTBkMjp7pkZKz1H4zrl-rwUMQfwuZ8>

Links for Further Information:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/haiti-more-cathedral>

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/page/haiti-photo-gallery>

<http://www.flickr.com//groups/1598247@N20/pool/show/>

<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/ens/2013/10/15/architects-unveil-plan-for-haitian-cathedral/>

This Lesson Plan to commemorate the January 12, 2010 Earthquake in Haiti was written by Cynthia Coe, www.ETChristianFormation.org.

Printed by the Office for Formation and Vocation Ministries of the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017.

© 2013 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.