

Lesson Plans That Work
The Anniversary of the January 2010 Earthquake in Haiti
Lesson Plan for Children/Younger Youth

Scripture: Isaiah 42:1-9

Theme: Rebuilding a Beacon of Hope in Haiti

Supplies Needed: Plain paper and markers, crayons, or multi-colored pencils; other art supplies may be used if you wish to offer children an opportunity to build models of a cathedral. A chime or small bell may be used to begin and end a time of silence.

Prepare: For a focal point of your time together, the leader might prepare a prayer table covered with a white cloth in celebration of the Baptism of Jesus. Candles or electric tea lights might be used to illuminate this table, symbolizing the Light of Christ. You may also print and display the photos contained within this lesson plan.

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.

Welcoming: Ask children to sit in a semi-circle around the prayer table. Point out the white color of celebration and ask what children might celebrate or be grateful for today.

Opening Prayer:

We thank you, Lord, for this time together. Help us to know and realize the Light of Christ within us all. Help us to serve as beacons of hope to others. In Christ's name, Amen.

Read: Isaiah 42:1-9 (Verses 1-4 only may be read to very small children.)

Questions:

- Did you hear the word “justice” in this passage?
- What does “justice” mean?
- What would “justice” mean to those in need of a place to live, food, clean water, or a place to worship?



The Story:

For younger children, this story may be read or told in the leader's own words. Older children or youth might take turns reading each paragraph of this story to the group. At the end of the lesson, you will find a simple “slideshow” of pictures and the story that you can print out and use to tell the story.

Rebuilding a Beacon of Hope in Haiti

What does our church building do for us? Does it only provide a place for us to meet each Sunday? What do all the pictures, symbols, and even parts of the building itself do for us as God's people?

In the Diocese of Haiti, on January 12, 2010, the people of Haiti experienced a strong earthquake. After the earthquake, the main church in diocese – the Cathedral of the Holy Trinity – had been destroyed. Along with the building itself, many large murals of artwork showing stories from the Bible were lost. The Cathedral was also a center of ministry, too. Several schools for children and young people were lost as well.

What would we do if we lost our places of worship and our centers of ministry? Would we want to re-build our house of worship and places for young people to learn and grow?

The Diocese of Haiti is the largest diocese in the Episcopal Church. Episcopalians in the Diocese of Haiti are our brothers and sisters in Christ. Many people in Haiti are very poor, and the Episcopal Church has many schools, medical clinics, and churches to serve as beacons of hope in this country. After the earthquake, many of our brothers and sisters in Haiti needed shelter and new homes, new schools to help children grow and learn, help with growing food to eat, and jobs.

The Episcopal Cathedral in Haiti must be rebuilt as well. The rebuilding of this place of worship will serve as a symbol of hope for the people of Haiti. The building will serve as a symbol of God's love for the people of Haiti...and a reminder of God's presence in their lives, no matter what happens and how dark our lives may be at times.



Activities & Responses:

One or more of these options may be used, depending on time available and interests of the leaders and learners.

Discussion Questions

- How would we feel if our own worship space were suddenly destroyed? Who would we look to for help as we tried to rebuild?
- What symbols, pictures, or parts of our own worship space help remind us of our story as God's people in our part of the world?
- If our worship space were destroyed, what would we want to include in a new building?
- How could we help the people of Haiti rebuild their lives and their church?
- For older children/youth – read Isaiah 42:1-9. How could we help bring justice to Haiti as its people rebuild their lives?

Silent Prayer for Hope in Haiti

The 2010 earthquake in Haiti lasted 35 seconds. To remember the losses suffered at this time, ask children 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. A bell or chime may be used to signify the beginning and end of this time of silence.

Art Responses

Art is a great way for children to express thoughts and feelings about difficult subjects, such as disasters and other traumatic events. These ideas for art responses may both give children and younger youth time and space to reflect on the earthquake in Haiti and give them a chance to think about how to build hope for the future.

A Simple Project – Supply each child with a blank sheet of paper and writing utensils of various colors. Ask children to draw their responses to this question:

**How would you design a new cathedral for Haiti,
so that it would be a symbol of hope for the future?**

After children have drawn their ideas, these pictures may be displayed to help others in the parish become aware of rebuilding efforts in Haiti.



A More Elaborate Project for Longer Time Periods or Older Children/Youth – Supply older children with wood, cardboard, yarn, and other basic art materials you might have on hand, and ask them to construct a model of a new cathedral for Haiti. They may make a model based on the actual plans for the new cathedral in Haiti, or they may use their imaginations to make a model of a new worship space that serves as a beacon of hope to those in need.

Questions for children/youth to consider as this model is built:

- What materials would be used, and where will they come from?
- Who will pay for construction costs? Where will this money come from?
- How will this new space be used? What would be different from the old building?

Closing Activity & Prayer:

Any Epiphanies? If time allows, ask each child or youth to name one new idea or fact he or she learned today.

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

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=A5YWQxMjrErmPCG6URwoSzUE-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.

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Photo/Mary Frances Schjonberg

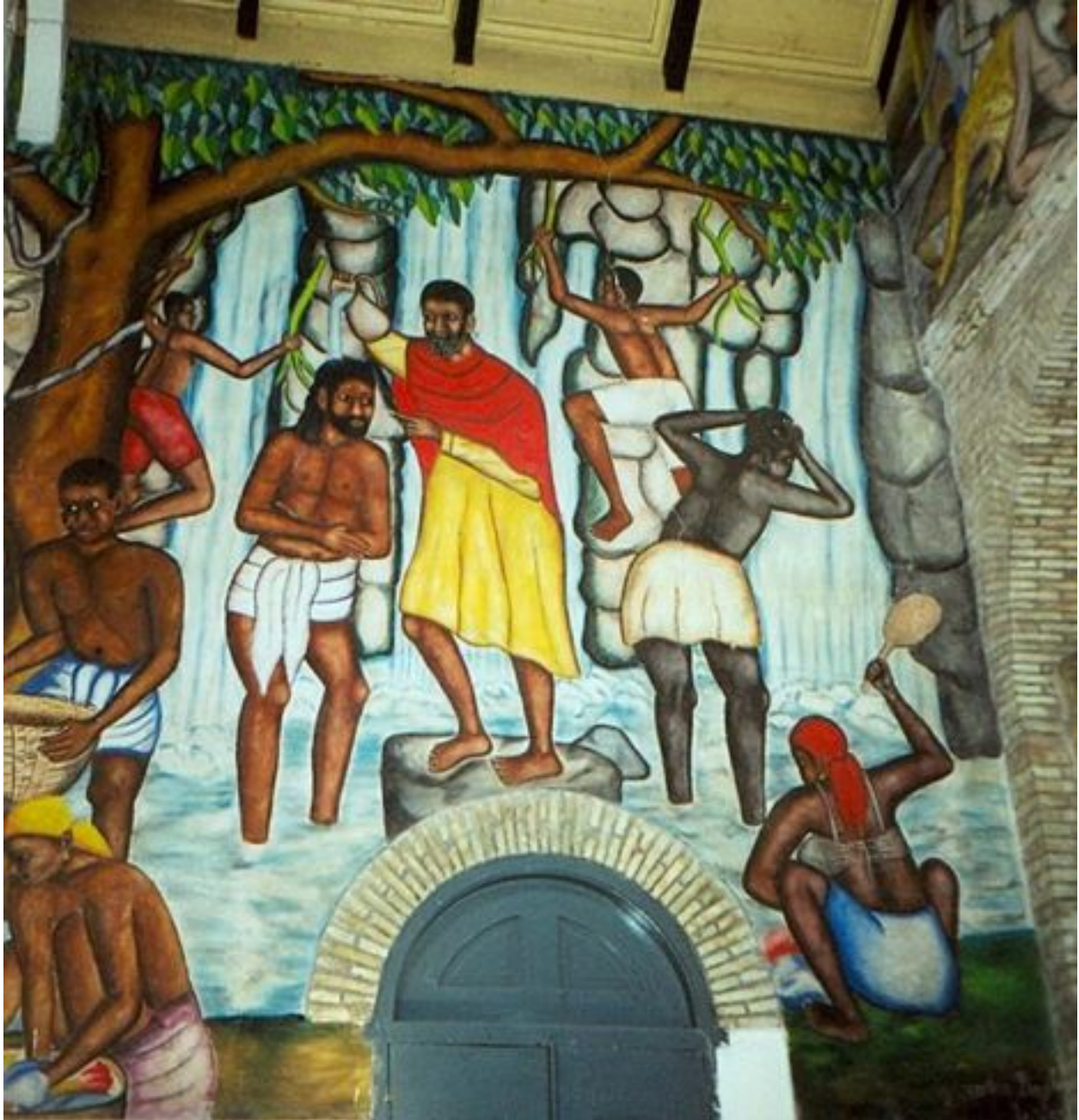


Photo/Lauren Stanley

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Photo/Lee Crawford

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