

In light of the tragic earthquake that devastated the country and people of Haiti, we are providing the following resource to enable children's leaders and teachers in Sunday School and other small group ministries to help children better understand this crisis event and respond. We will encourage children to focus on praying for and reaching out to the children of Haiti.

Use the lesson materials below to help the children of your church respond in love to this crisis event.

This material is geared more for the elementary children. However, there are questions geared for the early childhood children on page 6. You can read through the material and adapt the information for younger children. You can say the words in bold type to the children.

Crisis in Haiti

Ask, **When have you experienced terrible suffering?** (Let the children respond. Some may feel they have never experienced terrible suffering.) **What have you heard about the recent earthquake in Haiti?** (Let the children respond.) Let the children respond to the following questions: **When you heard about the earthquake in Haiti and the destruction it caused, what thoughts went through your mind? Did you wonder why God would let an event like that happen?** Say, **It**

is easy to feel stress when you think about questions like that.

There are many things we do not understand. We know God created a perfect world, but people chose to sin. One of the results of sin is that the world we live in is no longer perfect. Since we live in an imperfect world, we sometimes face natural disasters. When a natural disaster occurs, our response should be: "What do we do now? How can God work through us in this situation to bring about good?"

Let's take some time to find out what the Bible says about helping others and to learn how we can help boys and girls in Haiti.

Haiti, a Small, Struggling Country

NOTE: You can make an activity from this information.

Number the paragraphs, cut the paragraphs apart, and hide them in the room. Let the children find the paragraphs and arrange them in order. If the children desire, they can read the paragraphs.

Life in Haiti has always been difficult. Haiti is the poorest country in the western half of the earth. The people of Haiti struggle daily from hunger and sickness. The people have to work hard to meet their most basic needs of food, water, and shelter. The food, water, and shelter are often inadequate.

Life is difficult for Haitian children. Those who live in the mountains and villages work very hard. Young boys work in the fields with their fathers, feeding and caring for the animals. Young girls help with the cleaning and cooking and carry heavy buckets of water on their heads. Sometimes children carry things in baskets that weigh more than they do.

Some Haitians practice voodoo, yet they fear the voodoo spirits and the curses, or evil spells of the witch doctor. The Church of the Nazarene continues to offer hope in the midst of fear and oppression.

Haiti, a Mini History of Missions

The Church of the Nazarene opened the first Nazarene church in Haiti in 1950. Early church leaders started a Bible school to train Haitian pastors. Soon those pastors started churches and many people became Christians. Today there are about 500 churches with more than 115,000 Nazarenes.

Many Haitians, who once worshiped the evil spirits of voodoo, now have the freedom and joy of living as Christians. The Church of the Nazarene in Haiti has now become a sending church. That means they now send out

Haitian missionaries to other countries to share the good news of Jesus.

Haiti Today

Haiti, a beautiful, mountainous island in the Caribbean Sea, is now a home to huge amounts of debris. The suffering in Haiti is greater than we can imagine. Haiti was hit by an earthquake January 12, 2010. The earthquake measured 7.0 on the Richter scale. Hundreds of thousands of people have died. Many are wounded, homeless, and in need of food and water.

General Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, Dr. J. K. Warrick, was in Haiti when the earthquake hit. Dr Warrick said, "The earth became like an angry ocean--it was quite a ride."

Fifty-three Haitian orphans arrived in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on Tuesday morning, January 19, 2010. Governments are working as quickly as possible to move 900 Haitian orphans already adopted. Moving 900 children from Haiti is complicated by the crisis this country faces today. Though these Haitian orphans will be placed in homes, it is believed that "tens of thousands of children . . . lost their parents in the earthquake."

What Does the Bible Say?

Read the following verses aloud or select student volunteers to do so (depending upon the age and ability level of the children). After each verse, ask the questions provided.

John 13:34-35

1. How do you think Jesus showed His love for the disciples?

(He spent time with them. He taught them about God. He died for them and for us.)

2. Why does Jesus tell us to love each other? *(So people*

will know we are His disciples, and we are living as He taught.)

3. Why is this important? *(When people see how we love each,*

they may want to experience God's love and become a Christian, too.)

James 1:27

4. Why do you think widows and orphans are mentioned here?

*(Let the children respond.) Say, **This command can also apply to others who are weak, alone, or in need.***

James 2:14-17

5. Why is saying "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well

fed" not good enough? *(It doesn't actually help the person.)*

6. If we know the right things to do, but we don't do them, what does that say about our faith? (*We don't really have faith at all.*)

NOTE: Use the following questions for discussion if you are working with young children.

- 1. So many children have been left alone because of the earthquake. How do you think they feel right now?**
- 2. Jesus loves all hurting children. He wants us to care for them. How can you do that when you live so far away from them?** (*Pray and help to give them what they need*)

Children Can and Do Make a Difference

Say, **Sometimes this type of suffering is so overwhelming we may feel helpless. Jesus tells us in John 15:12, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." You may wonder how you show love to so many hurting people. You can show the love of Jesus to the Haitians through prayer and giving.**

Use these guidelines to lead a discussion of what children can do.

- You can pray. There are many prayer concerns. Make it your mission to pray for:

1. the children who lost their parents and other relatives.
2. food, water, and medical supplies for all the people
3. the rebuilding of homes, schools, and churches
4. good health for the people who are enduring such bad situations.

- **You can give.**

1. Currently, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries is seeking to provide people with food, water, and shelter. For a complete list of items requested by NCM and the relief effort on the ground in Haiti, click [here](http://www.caribbeannazarene.org/WMCaribbean/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GV1AUR2Igv%3d&tabid=872) (<http://www.caribbeannazarene.org/WMCaribbean/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=GV1AUR2Igv%3d&tabid=872>)

Requested Haiti relief items should be sent to:

Nazarene Compassionate Ministries

"Haiti Earthquake Relief"

c/o Obed Santiesteban

310 E. 5th St. Hialeah, FL 33010

2. A portion of the money given through the Kids Reaching Kids mission offering, "The Hope Project, Showing the

Depths of Jesus' Love to Street Children" will also be distributed to help the street children of Haiti. Log onto www.kidsreachingkids.com for more information about The Hope Project and how to contribute.

A video of Dr. Warrick describing the tragedy in Haiti and the needs of the Haitians can be found and viewed by clicking on the link below. **NOTE:** Preview first and determine if this is appropriate for young children. In Dr. Warrick's letter you will also find a link for giving.

<http://www.ncnnews.com/nphweb/html/ncn/section.jsp?sid=1000>

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Gather the children together for a time of specific prayer for the children of Haiti. Help them to know that their prayers are heard by God and make a difference. Invite the children to gather at an altar of prayer. Have children physically place their hands on the altar and pray that God will use the hands of people in Haiti to give help to the children who have been hurt in the earthquake.

Say, **Prayer is definitely the most important thing we can do. God loves the people of Haiti. Many people are working to care for the bodies and souls of the Haitians.**

The Church of the Nazarene is involved in doing this. You can pray and you can give.

Sources”

1. www.ncnnews.com, January 12, 2010. “The beginning of our response.”

2. www.ncnews.com, Open letter and video from General Superintendent J. K. Warrick on Haiti.

3. www.denverpost.com, January 20, 2010. First Haitian orphans arrive in U.S.”

4. www.foxnews.com, January 19, 2010. Dozens of Haitian Orphans Travel to U.S for Adoptions.”

5. Information for this lesson was also taken from the following sources: “Crisis in Haiti” lesson prepared and presented for adults by WordAction. The Beacon Hill Press children’s mission education curriculum lesson 3, “Haiti” written by Lorie Beckum.