

CWS Safe School Zones

Scripture Passage

Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the Lord will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the Lord will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. The Lord will guide you always; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail.

— Isaiah 58:6-11

Story Foundation

Schools found in the bustling Kenyan capital city of Nairobi are strikingly different from each other. The posh international schools look like miniature versions of the White House, with the children of ambassadors as students. The top public and private schools are built with painted cement blocks and furnished with desks and cement floors. Then, there are the schools in places with large poor and refugee populations. One rural school campus has a gaping hole in the wire fence meant to protect students and the learning environment. A classroom has a partially finished wall and a collapsing bookshelf. Multiple students share the same seat. At another school, the restroom had four inches of urine covering the floors. Behind each bathroom stall door, one overflowing toilet after another, with not enough water to get rid of the waste. The black 30-gallon water tank next to the sinks was bone dry. The sink handles turned, but no water flowed from the faucet. The janitor can never find enough water to sufficiently clean the restrooms.

This is the daily reality for many students. But doesn't have to be. You have the opportunity to change the way a child experiences school. You can spread joy the first week of school when students can have the chance to learn in a building with four walls, enough desks and a teacher ready to inspire them.



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minute for mission

Connecting Scripture and Story

God calls us to help the oppressed, hungry and those affected by injustice. He requires us to spend less time discussing problems and more time solving them. Our role is to satisfy the needs of the other. We are called to share our resources with these children, affected by the injustices in their neighborhoods, and not turn away. Think of all the resources that we have been provided by grace. All of our accomplishments are not completely by merit, but because of grace. Birth in the United States meant an opportunity to attend primary and secondary schools free of cost, regardless of social class or income. It isn't like this everywhere. Many schools worldwide are not funded by tax dollars; neither are teacher seminars and the general upkeep of walls and desks.

When we care for the marginalized children in our world, it's about more than a warm feeling after helping. Sometimes helping comes out of a significant sacrifice. But God promises to reward us. God promises to guide us and fulfill our own needs. God also promises to fill us with life, like a "well-watered garden." We get to rejoice with our brothers and sisters whose lives are changed because of our meaningful actions.

Additional Scriptural Support

Why should we help?

- God's heart for the poor and needy

May the mountains bring prosperity to the people, the hills the fruit of righteousness. May he defend the afflicted among the people and save the children of the needy; may he crush the oppressor.

— Psalm 72:3-4

My whole being will exclaim, "Who is like you, Lord? You rescue the poor from those too strong for them, the poor and needy from those who rob them."

— Psalm 35:10

"Christ has no body on Earth but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out. Yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."

— St. Teresa of Avila

- Biblical command

Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.

— 1 Timothy 6:18

- Promise of blessing

Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.

— Proverbs 19:17

- Avoid the Curse

Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses. — Proverbs 28:27

How can we help the poor worldwide?

- Kindness

It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.

— Proverbs 14:21

- Giving generously

Give generously to [the poor] and do so without a grudging heart, then because of this the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be open handed toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

— Deuteronomy 15:10-11

John answered, "The man with two tunics should share with him who has none, and the one who has food should do the same."

— Luke 3:11

- When should we help?

Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to act. Do not say to your neighbor, "Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you," when you already have it with you.

— Proverbs 3:27-28

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

— 1 John 3:17

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