



WELCOMED BY GOD
Welcoming All



NOVEMBER 2014

World Thank Offering: A Welcoming Spirit

By Yvette Richards

**World Thank Offering is the
spontaneous giving out of love for God
and people—making welcome possible!**

OBJECTIVE

That United Methodist Women members will discover creative ways to raise funds for the World Thank Offering so that the lives of women, children and youth will be impacted beyond measure.



Azaviea Brown, from South Carolina, helps wash a vehicle at Cabbage Patch Settlement House in Louisville, Ky., during an Ubuntu Day of Service before the 2014 United Methodist Women Assembly. The organization provides services to at-risk children and their families. (Paul Jeffrey)

PREPARATION

This program includes two events—a gathering to prepare the invitations and informational note cards and the program meeting to hold the World Thank Offering service. You will need to gather the following items to use during these two events.

NOTE: Please provide assignments to readers and participants at least a month prior to the program.

Materials

Gather the following items to use during the program:

- Black ink pens and markers.
- Card stock paper (blue, orange, Kelly green and purple).
- Clear craft glue.
- Construction paper in a variety of flesh tones.
- Hole punch.
- Index cards and labels.
- Offering baskets.
- Resealable bags.
- Ribbon (quarter-inch in blue, orange, Kelly green and purple)
- Scissors (regular or craft shape).
- World Thank Offering boxes; print your own from: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/donate/worldthank.

Resources

Make the following items available for the program:

- Copies of **response** magazine (see www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/response for articles relating to national and international mission).
- Maps of national and international mission printed from www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/nmi and www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/international-ministries.
- Prayer Calendar.
- *The United Methodist Hymnal*.
- United Methodist Women Bible (NRSV).

Participants (World Thank Offering Program)

Before the meeting ask individual women to help in the following roles:

- Welcome people as they walk through the door.
- Read Micah 6:1, 8.
- Read the prayer (included in the lesson under Devotions).
- Read the meditation (included in the lesson under Devotions).
- Facilitate the Exploration and Closing sections (three readers are needed for the Closing section).
- Help with activities.
- Lead the Closing Litany and songs.

Room Setup

Set up the room with sufficient space for everyone to sit and move around as needed for the business meeting and the program.

- Conduct the meeting around a table, if appropriate, or it can be held in a circle or semicircle so that it is conducive to conversation.
- Set up a table large enough to allow everyone to participate in activities for the program portion. If you are gathering in a home, move to the dining table or other similar surface.
- Set up a table in the center of the room with a cloth on it and basket in the center. This will be used for the World Thank Offering program.
- Enjoy snacks and beverages!

NOTES

FIRST GATHERING: FOOTPRINT – CHALLENGE FOR WORLD THANK OFFERING

This event should take place at the beginning of the month. The toolkit includes a footprint invitation card and a note card with information.

Women will donate a quarter for every pair of shoes they own. This will create an opportunity for your unit, circle or group to experience a transformational experience that will educate others in a profound way to give in recognition of their blessings.

Members will be able to personalize their request for giving this year.

Preparing the Footprint Toolkit

During the first week of November 2014 meet with your unit, circle or group to prepare for the offering collection and service that will take place at the end of the month. This meeting will help you to prepare and make several invitations using the materials listed above.

Use the template of your foot to cut out your invitation to participants in the World Thank Offering program. We will use these as invitations to offer participants in your home, church, work, friends and community to join in the giving for our World Thank Offering monthlong event. Make one invitation for each person you plan to invite.

1. Trace your foot on a sheet of paper. Use this as a template and select from the flesh tone construction paper.
2. Take the footprint and write: "I am donating 25 cents for every pair of shoes I own. Join me."
3. Take the note card with a personal message to participants.
4. On the other side of the note card include World Thank Offering information.
5. Include on the note card information about a National Mission Institution or an international project. You can write this information under the heading "Educational Moment of Sharing."
6. Place the footprint and the note card inside the resealable bag. Give the note card with a personal message as an invitation to people you know such as coworkers, friends, neighbors or others from your community.
7. Provide information on the toolkit for those who want to participate in the offering but are unable to attend the program. Place a label on the bag back with a return date and instruction for pickup.

You will also make thank-you bookmarks with the card stock paper. Use the colors associated with the World Thank Offering (blue, orange, Kelly green and purple).

1. Select a color of card stock paper and fold two inches of paper back and forth.
2. Cut strips of paper along the folds.
3. Then cut lengthwise five inches for a two-inch by five-inch bookmark.
4. Use a hole punch to place a hole at the top.
5. Take a ribbon of the same color and cut off an eight-inch piece.
6. Fold the ribbon in half and insert it through the hole, securing it with a knot.
7. Use markers to write a message of appreciation on the bookmark.
8. On the other side write, "United Methodist Women turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world." Include the website www.unitedmethodistwomen.org for more information.

The bookmarks will be handed out at the offering program when the offering is collected.

SECOND GATHERING – WORLD THANK OFFERING PROGRAM



READ: Micah 6:1, 8

Pray

Come, Holy Spirit, into our hearts and souls as we prepare to be the vessel that is transforming the world around us, one person at a time. Come, Holy Spirit, as we remember to give you the all the glory, honor and praise. Come, Holy Spirit, as we thank those that gave what they had so others can be taken care of in mighty and powerful ways that are beyond measure. We praise you, Holy Spirit, we honor you, Holy Spirit, and we give you glory for your welcoming spirit. **Amen!**

Meditate

Prior to the program, write each of the following letters of welcome with the word listed on index cards.

W: Witness

E: Encouraging

L: Loving

C: Compassionate

O: Obligation

M: Meaningful

I: Inspirational

N: Necessary

G: Grateful

In the large group, ask participants to express how they would welcome an individual into the group. Ask the participants to use their Bibles to find a scripture that would support their findings. (5 minutes)

Ask participants to form a semicircle. Then ask the first person to turn to the person next to her and, using the scriptures, explain how she would welcome her in to the unit, circle or group. Continue until everyone has had a turn.



ASK: How does God make it possible for us to welcome all people in different ways?

Read Together

We are the witness for God's great miracles, through encouraging others to make sure their voices are heard. We must always be encouraging to our sisters as we seek to live out the vision the Lord sets on our hearts. A loving spirit and kindness to strangers is what God seeks in the kingdom of righteousness. The compassionate person will strive to invite those left on the outside. Our overwhelming obligation is to make a seat at the table for others. This will energize our spirit of goodness and will provide the inspirational atmosphere for letting others know how the Lord works in our lives. We must provide comfort for strangers to understand how necessary they are to us. We are grateful that you choose to be with us as we turn faith, hope and love into action in welcoming all to receive God's grace and mercy.

EXPLORATION

Explore the impact of National Mission Institutions and international ministries of welcome that were made possible by gifts from United Methodist Women members to the World Thank Offering.

Let us explore the many places where your giving will empower and energize the individuals and organizations that will benefit from your offerings.

Share the maps of our national and international work.

Closing

Ask volunteers to collect the World Thank Offering boxes and footprint kits that were given out at the beginning of the month. As they collect the offering ask them to give out the handmade bookmarks. Ask the women to stand in a semicircle around the table with the basket.

Reader 1: Please ready your hearts, minds and souls as we bring to a close our monthlong celebration of welcoming others into being able to bless others through their unselfish giving.

Reader 2: Let us pray for our mission workers and projects lifted in the Prayer Calendar for the day. *(Read the names of those who are listed for today's date.)*

Reader 3: Let us join in a prayer from the back of United Methodist Women Bible (NRSV). *(Use a prayer of your choosing.)*

Sing

"Sweet, Sweet Spirit," *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 334

CLOSING LITANY

Divide the women into sections for this responsive reading of Psalm 139:1-18 (NIV).

Leader: You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.

Middle: You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue you, Lord, know it completely.

ALL: As a sisterhood of faith you are welcomed in this place!

Leader: You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me.

Right: Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.

Left: If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

ALL: As a sisterhood of hope you are welcomed in this place!

Front: For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb.

Leader: I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

Middle: My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

ALL: As a sisterhood of love you are welcomed in this place!

Middle: Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

Right: How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them!

Left: Were I to count them, they would outnumber the grains of sand—when I awake, I am still with you.

ALL: As a sisterhood of faith, hope and love, we welcome you to transform the lives of women, children and youth through giving beyond measure! Hallelujah!

Yvette Richards is the president of United Methodist Women national organization.