

## All-age Resources for Public Worship

### Introduction

The two interactive all-age reflections below are designed to help congregations explore two of the sustainable development themes being highlighted in the 2014 World Development Appeal:

in **Haiti**, in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake, the construction not just of new houses, but of new and sustainable communities;  
and in **Myanmar/Burma**, the work of advocacy for people with disabilities.

Both reflections are designed for an all-age worship setting, but both can be expanded or simplified according to your context, a larger congregation or a smaller group of children, a mixed age group or a single age group, and so on.

Finally, there is a layout for an interactive reading of Isaiah 65.17-19; 21-22, one of Isaiah's prophetic visions of the new earth which God is about to create (Isaiah 65.17).

### Just because it has four walls . . .

Gerrard Deserne, who works with Christian Aid partner, GARR, is committed to the provision of quality housing, good housing, for all the people in Haiti who still need a home. *Housing, for us*, he says, *automatically means **good** housing. Just because something has four walls and a roof doesn't mean anyone should have to live in it.* This reflection helps groups to explore what good housing means.

Preparation:

You will need three large cardboard cubes with blank sides. You can make these yourself from stiff paper, using an online template, or you can find three cardboard boxes of similar size and cover them with paper. The cubes have to be sturdy enough for someone to be able to write on each face of the cube with markers.

Activity:

You can lead into this activity, if you wish, by showing the appropriate Appeal video, or by talking about the work of our Appeal partners in Haiti.

Invite the children, or the congregation as a whole, to think together about what good housing means to them. Show your three large, blank cubes, which are like building blocks, and ask the group to help you name some of the things that would make a good house. You will need a list of 18 things, as you will write one thing on each side of each cube, until you have something written on each face of each cube.

You can think of practical things, like clean water, windows, a toilet. You can think of useful things like an oven or wireless internet. You can think of social things, like room for a big table, so you can invite friends to eat with you, or a location for your house which provides you with neighbours. Try to ensure that the list is varied!

Then invite the children, or small groups in the congregation, to “start building” by choosing the most important face/item on each cube. (So there will be six items on each cube, and you have to choose the one you think is most important, and then set the cube down with this most important thing face up. Do this for each of the three cubes, as if the cubes were dice which you rolled, and the number you wanted came up!)

You can have any amount of conversation about what people chose and why, and then lead the discussion back to the new houses being built in Haiti, which are good housing because (and you can highlight whatever aspects you wish here) they are solid and resistant to earthquakes and heavy rain; because there is a source of clean water nearby; because they are built with room around them for a small garden where people can grow food to eat, and so on. And they are also *good housing* because the new residents were consulted before the houses were built, and had a chance, as we just did, to think ahead of time about what was most important, and what makes housing good.

Prayer:

God, you are creating the earth as a home for all people. Thank you for giving us this chance to work in partnership with the people of Haiti, and we pray that all people will soon live in housing that is good. Amen.

### **What’s your disability?**

The 7-Up Disability Advocacy Project in Myanmar is helping a country emerging from international isolation and political repression to embrace a fresh perspective on disability, which is currently a significant predictor of extreme poverty. This reflection invites us to do the same thing.

Preparation:

With your own group in mind, you need to think of two or three simple actions that the people in front of you could usually expect to be able to do without any trouble, like cutting out a map of Myanmar (which you have previously sketched on a piece of coloured paper), or bringing you something you forgot from the back of the room.

Activity:

You begin by asking someone to do the first task, for example, *I need someone to cut out this map of Myanmar for the congregation to see*. However, in the meantime, you will have arranged things so that what looks like a simple task turns out not to be, because the scissors you have provided are so blunt they won’t cut at all, or because the map and scissors are on a very high table or shelf that your 10 year old volunteer can’t reach, or whatever. Or perhaps the thing you need from the back of the room is too bulky to be carried. Be inventive! The point, however, is not to embarrass your volunteer, but to put her in a position where she has to go looking for the tools or the help she needs (instead of just being able to do it, easy-peasy, by herself).

So the child will probably go looking for a better pair of scissors, or if you need to prompt the conversation, you can talk about what she might do next. If the table or shelf is too high, she might get a chair, or ask someone to lift her up.

In the same way, the bulky item might be manageable if your volunteer asks for help, or maybe the door is too narrow, and he will have to look for another way in.

When everyone has had a good laugh, and your volunteer has been able to complete the task, you will be able to point out that there was no lack of ability on the part of the volunteer. She simply didn't have the tools, or the height, or whatever that she needed, and once those were available, she was able to complete the task without any problem.

So a person with a disability is not someone who lacks ability, but someone who simply doesn't yet have the tools or the support he needs to use his abilities, and our Appeal partners, The Leprosy Mission, are helping other people to understand this, too.

**Interactive reading: Isaiah 65.17-19; 21-22**

17 Look! I'm creating a new heaven and a new earth:

past events won't be remembered;  
they won't come to mind.

18 Be glad and rejoice forever  
in what I'm creating,  
because I'm creating Jerusalem as a joy  
and her people as a source of gladness.

19 I will rejoice in Jerusalem and be glad about  
my people.  
No one will ever hear the sound of weeping or  
crying in it again.

21 They will build houses and live in them;  
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.  
22 They won't build for others to live in,  
nor plant for others to eat.

Like the days of a tree will be the days of my  
people;  
my chosen will make full use of their  
handiwork.

*(Shade your eyes with your hand, and slowly  
look around you in a 180 degree sweep)*

*(Rejoice! Clap and whistle, drum on the pew in  
front of you, use tambourines, whatever!)*

*(Reader takes a long pause here, until everyone  
is completely silent, then reads v 19 slowly,  
leaving time to absorb the words)*

*(Now we should hear hammering, or people  
can mime building actions; and digging actions  
for the vines; a purposeful busyness, in which  
people are helping one another, working  
together; let this go on for a minute)*

*(People stand still and stretch out their arms like  
tall trees, and look around them, embracing their  
work, and each other)*