



DISCUSSION GUIDE

CELEBRATION OF HOPE LOBBY EXHIBITS

Celebration of Hope gives us the opportunity to marvel at the amazing work God has done through our global partners and the thousands of churches that they represent around the world. God is using His church to bring hope, and we have the opportunity to partner with Him in what He is doing around the world.

Use this Discussion Guide to learn a little more about the Celebration of Hope exhibits. The questions included are intended to help you, your family, friends, or small group connect on a deeper level with the work that God is doing in and around the world.

Jordan: Refugees

Jordan receives the second highest number of refugees per capita in the world, with over 760,000 registered refugees living in the country. Our partner in Amman is actively meeting the needs of the Syrian, Iraqi, Palestinian, and Sudanese refugees by providing food, clothing, and support services.

This exhibit highlights some of the crucial work our partners are doing to provide a safe space for children to learn and know the love of Jesus. It displays drawings from children who were asked to reflect on the life they fled compared to their new life in Jordan. These striking drawings give us an insight into the pain, horror, and injustice facing so many refugee families. And are a reminder that in the midst of so much pain and destruction, the local church can be a place of welcome, love, and care for families who have been through unthinkable trauma.

Discussion Questions:

- What is one drawing that sticks out to you? Why?
- How has your perception of refugees changed over the years? How so?

Malawi: Agriculture & Clean Water

This exhibit highlights the myriad ways in which clean water positively affects global communities, especially in Malawi. Clean water is used for drinking, raising livestock, growing fruits and vegetables, creating small businesses, and so much more. It is one of the pillars of community development work because it is one of our basic needs, and with the right tools and ingenuity, it can become a major asset to local churches, farmers, and families. Our partner in Malawi pumps fresh water from a deep water well to irrigate 1,292 banana plants that will produce over \$32,600 worth of bananas each year. To put that into perspective, that is 122,480 lbs of bananas, the equivalent of 8 ½ school buses. That is enough revenue to provide 11,747 people with clean water through a new well, which is more than the population of Barrington, IL!

Discussion Questions:

- Think through your day to day use of water. What can you spend time in prayerful gratitude for when it comes to your water consumption? How does this exhibit highlight the stewardship responsibility Christians have towards the environment and resources like water? (if you want to take a deep dive into your water consumption footprint, you can complete this free online calculator: <https://www.watercalculator.org>)
- Jesus often spoke about caring for the marginalized and vulnerable. How does the exhibit remind us of our responsibility to ensure access to basic necessities like clean water for all?

Zambia: Seeds & Livestock

This exhibit displays an example of what a garden bed looks like in Zambia where we send seeds. An average garden bed that our partners are able to grow in Zambia is 5 feet x 16 feet (80 square feet). And one envelope of bell pepper seeds is enough to plant three garden beds! That means one million envelopes of seeds are able to plant three million garden beds! That's the equivalent of more than 45 football fields worth of veggies!

Discussion questions:

- How many packs of seeds do you think you've packed at Willow? Can you try and imagine how many garden beds you've helped fill?
- What does the red pepper story teach you about patience? Why do you think patience can feel like a luxury in a place like Zambia?

El Salvador: Leadership Development

In El Salvador, the development of church and community leaders is the key to unlocking sustainable transformation in extremely impoverished communities. Their training serves as their roots, anchoring them in the opportunities and strengths of their community. Last year, in just one region of El Salvador called Santa Ana, 151 leaders were trained, leading to the positive direct impact of nearly 23,000 people through strategic projects, such as roads, bridges, homes, and eco-stoves, all for the glory of God.

Discussion Questions:

- What are ways you have been empowered to step into leadership? What are the notable experiences and who are the key people who have been part of that?
- In what ways do you wish you could learn or be trained more effectively in Compassion and Justice work here in Chicagoland? Create a plan to begin that process in the next week.

India: Local Church & Persecution

In India, God is on the move in big ways despite rampant persecution. When families accept Jesus, their lives totally shift in the communities they live in. School buses that used to drive their kids to school no longer stop to pick up their kids. Men and women are barred from accessing clean water from community water wells and forced to walk miles every day for clean water. Yet, in the face of such intense opposition, thousands of people are experiencing the liberating and life-giving grace of Jesus for the first time. When we build clean water wells and public bathrooms at the churches we partner with, the churches invite the same people who persecute them to come and partake in what God has provided their community. They are turning the other cheek and walking the extra mile, and entire communities are being transformed as a result.

Discussion questions:

- Take a moment to imagine your community systematically turning their back on you because of your faith. What would that look and feel like? In this spirit of empathy, reflect and pray for our Indian brothers and sisters as they face this in their daily lives.
- What are the barriers that exist in your life that keep you from sharing the life-giving Gospel with your friends and family? How might our friends in India be inspiring you to live out your faith?

Global Lift Collective: Maximizing our Impact

The Global Lift Collective is a new initiative that brings together the strengths of multiple organizations that are dedicated to fighting poverty and injustice in Malawi and Central America. By leveraging different organizations' gifts, we are able to more holistically equip local churches with the tools they need to help their communities thrive.

Because of the Global Lift Collective, more churches have access to life saving clean water initiatives, agricultural training opportunities, savings group ministries, and pastoral training - just to name a few things!

Through this initiative we are able to make every investment our church makes have the greatest possible impact.

Discussion questions:

- Can you think of a hard project or task you took on with a team? Imagine if you had to do that thing alone! Fighting poverty and injustice is a hard task which is why it's so important for churches to work together.
- What do you think prevents churches from working together more?

Prayer Wall

This exhibit highlights who we partner with - which is local organizations that work with networks, or groups, of local churches. We are intentional with our global engagement strategy, believing that the local church is the hope of the world, and that investing in local churches, full of Christ followers using their gifts and skills for good, is the wisest and most impactful investment that we can make with our giving.

This exhibit also gives us an opportunity to pray for our partners around the world. We know that everything we do begins with God. Philippians 4:6-7 tells us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Listen to our partners prayer requests, and then, when you're ready, **call 224-512-2024** and leave a voicemail prayer for our partners. These prayers will be delivered to our partners as a way to encourage them in their good work of fighting poverty and injustice so that lives are transformed and Jesus is made known!

Discussion questions:

- How does it feel to pray for our partners? How has God used prayer in your life?
- Investing in local churches has the potential to impact entire communities. Why do you think investing in the local church through Celebration of Hope leads to such a large impact when compared to investing that same amount of money into one person?

Building Together

Celebration of Hope is a time to open our eyes to the movement of God through the local church around the world! From rural Zambia to the urban centers of India (and everywhere in between) God is on the move through local churches thinking creatively about how to fight poverty and injustice so that lives are transformed and Jesus is made known. Communities are providing the next generation with better educational opportunities, people are pooling resources to empower entrepreneurs to start businesses, churches are purchasing land to dig wells so that more people have access to clean water, no matter their background or beliefs, and all this is made possible when followers of Jesus decide to build a better future, together!

Discussion Question:

- What does it mean for you to build hope?
- What is the one step you can take to be part of the work of the global church?