



The Lutheran World Federation
Adult Forum Lesson Plan
50 minute class

The LWF at 60: 66 million people DO make a difference!

Goals:

- To inform participants of the global work of the LWF
- To share stories that help participants understand current issues of concern that are addressed by the LWF
- To make connections through specific prayer requests and giving opportunities

Resources needed:

- One LWF map for each participant or a few to share (available through the Augsburg/Fortress Distribution Center for mailing costs only by calling 800-328-4648)
- Statistic Sheet for each person – available at www.elca.org/lwf
- The LWF at 60 for each person– available at www.elca.org/lwf
- LWF Quiz for each person and one answer sheet – available at www.elca.org/lwf
- Optional – Power Point available at www.elca.org/lwf

Format:

- Opening Overview
- Quiz
- Statistic Sheet
- Map exercise
- Three or four short stories to be read and discussed

Opening Overview:

In 1947 Lutherans came together following WWII to form the LWF in order to assist with caring for the tens of thousands of refugees in Europe, many of whom were Lutheran, and to begin to heal the wounds where Lutherans had been at war with other Lutherans.

Today we are 66 million members strong, and 66 million Lutherans DO make a difference! The LWF is made up of 140 member church bodies in 78 countries. We have relief and development projects around the world, we are active in responding to the needs of the 140 churches, involved with ecumenical relations, human rights advocacy, HIV and AIDS work, theology and studies and countless other ministries.

The LWF understands itself to be more than a loose federation of churches. We are a *communion* of churches, which means we are accountable to one another, responsible to each other, walk with each other and are in full communion with one another.

LWF General Secretary, Dr. Ishmael Noko, says the following:

“We are a communion of churches united through Word and Sacrament. This holds us together in a more profound sense than any constitutional requirements.

Whenever and wherever we gather in local congregations to hear the Word and celebrate the Sacraments we are reminded that we do so as part of the communion of saints worldwide. This wider communion must become for us more than an abstract, faceless reality. We must be able to touch, hear, taste and experience this reality firsthand. Through God's grace, we are able in solidarity to share our pains and joys, our burdens and gifts." (Pre Assembly Documentation 2003)

So, what *is* the LWF and what do we do?

Quiz:

This quiz gives a good overview of the LWF. Allow everyone about 7-8 minutes to take the quiz by circling the right answer or answers and then go through it together with answers and discussion.

Statistic Sharing:

Share the information on church membership numbers and look at the trends in membership increases or decreases by region. Ask what their thoughts are on the causes of either increases or decreases. Suggest that participants use the front of the sheet as a devotional tool to "pray around the world."

Map Exercise:

Open maps and explain the key. Let participants study the maps for a moment or two. Then ask them to find particular countries and share what they know by virtue of the key. For example:

- Argentina: Country with an LWF member church and projects
- Cambodia: Country with LWF projects
- Costa Rica – Country with member church
- Croatia- Country with LWF member church and projects

Stories:

Find the country on the map and invite a participant to read one of the stories. Take some time to discuss the issue and LWF's role as time allows.

Closing:

The LWF is around the world. Our name is on clean water projects, grain banks, HIV and AIDS programs, evangelism training, goats, refugee camps, theological education, farming techniques, ecumenical relationships, etc. 66 million Lutherans DO make a difference! Please keep the LWF in your thoughts and prayers.

Prayer:

Gracious God, we gather here mindful of our family around the world, those who awoke hungry this morning and will go to bed hungry tonight; those who are ravaged with the disease and despair of HIV and AIDS; those who live in fear of bombs and destruction; those who long for a word of hope.

We give thanks for all those who woke this day to feed the hungry, and care for those in need. We give special thanks today for our work together through the Lutheran World Federation. May your gracious Spirit be active and comforting to all. Open our minds now and awaken your call to us. In gratitude we pray. Amen

Additional Resources:

www.elca.org/lwf

www.lutheranworld.org

LWF North America Office: 1-800-638-3522 ext 2636

Giving opportunities:

World Hunger, ELCA (30 cents of each dollar goes to LWF)

ELCA World Hunger Appeal, Box 71764, Chicago IL 60694

GHDA/CLWR in the ELCIC

National Church Office, 302-393 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg MB R3B 3H6

Gifts to the LWF Endowment Fund – 1-800-638-3522- 2760

Direct designated gifts to the LWF can also be sent through the LWF N.A. Office

LWF, 8765 West Higgins Road, Chicago IL 60631

Story: Dim Yen, Cambodia

Dim Yen, 29 years old, lives in a small village in central Cambodia not far from the great lake named Tonle Sap. The thatched walls and ceiling of her home let in the humid breeze on this hot day in the midst of the hot, rainy season. Her home stands on stilts to protect it from frequent floods. She was just two years old in 1979 when the Khmer Rouge regime was toppled. Her father and three brothers were killed in the fighting.

Dim Yen welcomes us up the steep steps into her home and to her table. She offers us water to quench our thirst. As we take a welcome seat on the floor in her home, we respond with a typical phrase: “Oh thanks, we’re dying for a glass of water.” No, she says, “We’re dying for a glass of clean water!”

In this country where 4 1/2 million people live below the poverty line – making less than \$1 per day, clean water is a subject on many minds.

As she ladles water from a bucket, she tells us she is one of the chair persons of the village water committee. The LWF came to her village four years ago to drill one deep well and teach about the necessity of clean water.

She has learned that in the rainy season it is extra important to guard against water borne disease. She still struggles with mothers who scoop up water from ponds or rice paddys. The death rate among children under age five due to diarrhea is astounding. Globally, 60% of infant deaths are linked to infectious and parasitic disease, most of which is water related.

She tells of her village, where four years ago, much of the standing water was contaminated by human and animal feces. Washing your hands in that water really only made them dirtier. Women gathered water each morning – some from a stream, some from standing water in the fields, some from buckets set out to catch rain water. That water served for cooking, bathing and drinking.

Thanks to the LWF, her village is “clean”. We ask if the well is in her yard, and she laughs at us. “No”, she says, but it is just a ten minute walk. She tells us how she threads four buckets on to a long pole and walks to the well. She likes that early morning walk because of the early morning sounds of birds and monkeys in the trees. The path is filled with other women with the same task. She fills all four buckets with the clean water and then walks slowly back to her house so as not to spill. When she gets to the house, she covers two of the buckets and sets them on a stand in the shade. Then she starts a fire and sets a pot of water over the fire. Soon she has hot water and makes tea. She dips some of the water out for washing hands and faces. Then she starts the rice cooking and does “a load of laundry” by hand washing garments in the hot water and draping them over shrubs to dry.

She works with families and encourages them not to let up in teaching their children about safe drinking water. She does regular checks on the well water and reports to a regional water board frequently.

The LWF no longer is in her village, but she remembers us well and thanks us for giving “water for life”. Her village is no longer dying for a drink of clean water!

Story: Sabina – Kakuma Refugee Camp, Kenya

It is evening in Kenya and the sun has just set in the Kakuma Refugee Camp. It has been a hot and dry day. A woman is tending children and watching a pot of cassava bubbling over the open fire. We come closer to the fire and engage in conversation with her. Her name is Sabina.

Sabina tells us: “The rebel forces came into our village and wanted everything we had, up to the last clothes on our bodies. They killed several of my family members and neighbors. I could not find my husband, so I just grabbed our six, four, and three-year-old children and ran. I had the baby on my back.

The journey through the steppes and stony desert of southern Sudan to the NW Kenyan border lasted nine days with temperatures as high as 102 degrees and with hardly anything to eat or drink. Sabina buried the baby under an acacia tree.

Upon arrival at the camp, Sabina was met by LWF staff and immediately received the basic necessities for herself and her children. They could eat and sleep temporarily under the big corrugated iron roof. She was given some cooking utensils and enough blankets for the whole family. Within a few days they were assigned a hut of their own and the family began to reconstruct a life.

As we gather around the light of her cooking fire in the now cool evening, Sabina tells of how **you** dramatically changed her life. **You** gave her two hens and a rooster -- along with a pumpkin plant. She had eggs and soon had baby chicks. The pumpkin plant has provided two types of vegetables for her family – the pumpkin itself and the edible spinach-like leaves.

After settling in, she applied to the LWF for a loan to purchase two goats. To be eligible for the loan, she had to agree that the first two goats born to her family would be given to other families. Do you know about goats? They provide rich manure for the pumpkin patch and provide nutrient rich milk for the children. They are also quite amorous and multiply like crazy, so goats abound!

Two hens, a rooster, a pumpkin plant and goats, the richness of god’s bounty shared. You were there – as members of the Lutheran World Federation. You are there, following the model of Jesus in providing a meal and hope. You are there...in Jesus’ name.

Kakuma Camp was begun by the UN in 1992 care for 30,000 refugees, mostly young boys from Sudan. The UN has requested the LWF to manage the refugee camp and provide the lead agency role. Today, the population of the camp has grown to nearly 90,000 refugees. 44,000 are under the age of 17.

Story: Mauritania

When our LWF staff colleague Colette Bouka Coula meets us at the airport, our first impressions are of a blur of heat, sand and strange smells. If camel smells and sandstorms are your “thing”, then you will think that you have come to paradise!

The great droughts of the early 1970s caused massive problems in this country where 70% of the people were nomads – people, who for centuries had wandered the desert, now lost their herds of camels, donkeys, goats and sheep. Destitute, they flocked to the capital city of Nouakchott to a radically changed urban life. Today only 15% remain nomadic. The LWF entered this crisis in 1974. Beginning with emergency relief, our work has evolved into rehabilitation and development. Belts of lush green forest now exist around the capital city as we have planted

thousands of trees to hold back the desert. In fact, there is a story that goes about in Africa that says 90% of the trees in Mauritania are Lutheran! *66 million Lutherans DO make a difference!*

Story: Russia

There was no training in Russia for Lutheran pastors during the time of the Soviet Union. The seminary in Novosaratovka is doing its best to educate a whole new population of pastors, youth workers, church musicians, and catechists. With our support, the LWF is educating new leadership for the church! Eight men and women are able to begin seminary each year. *66 million Lutherans DO make a difference!*

Story: Zimbabwe

This week in Zimbabwe 3,000 people will die of AIDS. Over 780,000 children in Zimbabwe are AIDS orphans. Can you even imagine what that must be like? To be a child of eight or nine, grieving the death of your parent and now responsible for the care, feeding and safety of three younger siblings? Through the LWF, you care for these kids and provide hope by providing school fees, clothing, and food packs. *66 million Lutherans DO make a difference!*