

NetsforLife[®] Inspiration Fund Group Discussion Guide

October 2010



Overview

Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church. Guided by the principles of compassion, dignity and generosity, we work with our worldwide partners in the Anglican Communion to respond to human suffering in more than 40 countries. We provide relief in times of disaster and promote long-term, sustainable development. Our programs help people overcome the root causes of poverty through alleviating hunger and improving food supply, creating economic opportunities, strengthening communities and promoting health and fighting disease.

One of the important ways in which Episcopal Relief & Development works to fight disease is through its *NetsforLife*[®] program partnership to fight malaria. A deadly, infectious disease transmitted by mosquitoes, malaria kills one child every minute in sub-Saharan Africa. Long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets are the first line of defense against this scourge, and one net can save up to three people from suffering and death. Since 2008, *NetsforLife*[®] has delivered more than 2 million nets across 17 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Partnering with churches and faith-based groups in remote areas, *NetsforLife*[®] combats malaria by training local health agents to deliver life-saving nets and prevention education in their communities.

About the NetsforLife[®] Inspiration Fund

At the 2003 General Convention, the Episcopal Church made an initial commitment to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This pledge was set into action in 2006 through the Church's endorsement of Episcopal Relief & Development's MDG Inspiration Fund, which raised over \$3.2 million in three years. In 2009, the Church renewed its support of the MDGs by endorsing the *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund and contributing 0.7% of its annual budget to this national effort.

Working at the grassroots level within the Episcopal community, the Inspiration Fund will help *NetsforLife*[®] fulfill its promise to distribute 7 million nets over the next three years. Combined with education and training, this effort will better more than 21 million lives in 30,000 communities across Africa. Through the Inspiration Fund, parishioners, clergy, students and seminarians can continue to work to address the Millennium Development Goals through the work of Episcopal Relief & Development.

Purpose of Discussion Guide

The purpose of this discussion guide, which is intended for parish adult forums and college and seminary groups, is threefold. First, we hope that the presentation and discussion it accompanies will be a source of information for parishes about the global problem of malaria. A second goal is to provide spiritual grounding for parishes as the Church seeks ways to fulfill our Baptismal Covenant promise to "seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves." Last but not least, our hope is that the discussion and guide will inspire parishes and individuals to take collective action and consider joining the national *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund.

Logistics

We recommend that the facilitator(s) read this guide thoroughly before planning a discussion. Feel free to adapt the guidelines to your group's particular needs. This study is designed to take approximately 35 to 40 minutes.

What You Will Need:

- **DVD**—This guide is designed to accompany the *NetsforLife*® Inspiration Fund “End of the Road” DVD. Please order the DVD in advance by emailing inspiration@er-d.org or calling 800.334.7626, ext. 5129 with your name, parish or group name and mailing address.
- **Audio-visual equipment**—Television and DVD player, or a computer and projector, to show the *NetsforLife*® Inspiration Fund DVD
- **Discussion questions**—A list of suggested questions for discussion can be found in the Facilitating the Discussion section below.
- **Dry-erase board or newsprint pad, markers and easel:** Use these to brainstorm ideas for action during the discussion.
- **Handouts**—You can download and print out a number of free materials from the Inspiration Fund website, such as fact sheets on malaria and *NetsforLife*® and stories about the program's impact, at <http://www.inspirationfund.org/get-involved-o>.
- **Facilitator**—We recommend one facilitator for every 12 to 15 people. If your group is large, consider recruiting additional facilitators and dividing into smaller groups for discussion.

Planning for the Study

- **Space**—Reserve a room ahead of time. Make arrangements to have the audio-visual equipment, a technical support person and enough chairs available on the planned date.
- **Promoting the event**—Begin promoting the event several weeks ahead through your parish newsletter, Sunday service leaflet and pulpit announcements.
- **Preparing facilitators**—Ensure that all facilitators have read through the study guide and understand what is expected.
- **Setting up**—On the day of the study, allow time before the study begins to set up the room. Connect the television and DVD player, or computer and projector, and make sure the DVD will run properly. Arrange chairs in a circle to enhance the discussion time.

Tips for Facilitators

- To ensure that the study stays on time, have someone serve as timekeeper and signal you five minutes before the scheduled ending time.
- Ask open-ended questions (ones that need more than a simple “yes” or “no” answer) to help keep the discussion flowing.
- After asking a question, allow a few moments for people to respond. If no one answers, try rewording the question another way.
- If there's still no response after rephrasing a question, you might share your own thoughts and then move on to the next question. (Take care not to end up doing all the talking, however.)
- If one person is dominating the discussion, thank him or her for contributing and redirect the conversation by saying, “Let's hear from some others who haven't shared their thoughts yet” or by moving on to the next question.

Facilitating the Study

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Greet participants and if desired, have them briefly introduce themselves to the group. Begin the time with a word of prayer. You can invite one of the group members to pray or give the prayer yourself.

Overview (5 minutes)

Give the group an outline of the time ahead. The discussion will start with a brief introduction to Episcopal Relief & Development and the *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund (background information follows). You will then watch a short DVD presentation on what *NetsforLife*[®] is doing to combat malaria and then focus on discussing what you have seen and how you can collectively respond.

About Episcopal Relief & Development and *NetsforLife*[®]

Episcopal Relief & Development is the international relief and development agency of the Episcopal Church. The agency works with worldwide partners in the Anglican Communion in more than 40 countries. Its programs help people address root causes of poverty through overcoming disaster, alleviating hunger, creating economic opportunities, strengthening communities and promoting health and fighting disease. One of the important ways in which Episcopal Relief & Development fights disease is through its *NetsforLife*[®] program partnership to prevent malaria. A deadly disease transmitted by mosquitoes, malaria kills one child each minute in sub-Saharan Africa. *NetsforLife*[®] works to save lives by delivering insecticide-treated mosquito nets and training in malaria prevention to communities in 17 African countries.

About the *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund

At the 2003 General Convention, the Episcopal Church made an initial commitment to support the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This pledge was set into action in 2006 through the Church's endorsement of Episcopal Relief & Development's MDG Inspiration Fund, which raised over \$3.2 million in three years. In 2009, the Church renewed its support of the MDGs by endorsing the *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund and contributing 0.7% of its annual budget to this national effort. Working at the grassroots level within the Episcopal community, the Inspiration Fund will help *NetsforLife*[®] deliver upon its promise to distribute 7 million nets over the next three years. Combined with education and training, this work will better more than 21 million lives in 30,000 communities across the continent.

Presentation (4 minutes)

- Watch the *NetsforLife*[®] Inspiration Fund DVD presentation, "End of the Road."
- After it finishes, turn off the equipment and allow group members a moment of silence in which to reflect.

Discussion (20-25 minutes)

- Start the discussion by asking, "Would anyone like to share initial thoughts or reactions to what we've just seen?"
- Allow several minutes for participants to answer.

If the group is large, you may wish to divide into smaller groups at this point. Following are some suggested questions for guiding the remaining discussion. Feel free to add your own or to let the flow of the conversation guide you in what questions to ask.

- Did anything surprise you about the global malaria crisis? What was most disturbing? Where did you see glimmers of hope?
- One child dies each minute in sub-Saharan Africa from this disease. Since we began this session, more than 15 children will have died. How does hearing this make you feel?
- What is the loss from malaria to family? To community and nation? To our global community?
- Even though malaria isn't present in the U.S., how and why does it impact us?
- As people of faith, do we have a call and responsibility to respond to this issue? How does it relate to our Baptismal Covenant promise to "seek and serve Christ in all people"?
- Are there other issues in our daily lives that call us to respond?
- At times, given the scope of the needs in the world, it can feel difficult or overwhelming to try to respond. What makes it possible for us to act?

Moving Towards Action (5-8 minutes)

Use the following questions to encourage the group to brainstorm. Write down the ideas using the dry erase board or butcher paper and markers. Invite participants to take the lead in initiating action on ideas.

- What can we do collectively in our parish and the wider community to respond?
- If your parish is already taking part in a *NetsforLife*® Inspiration Fund diocesan campaign or holding its own, start by inviting the group members to join. If not currently participating in a campaign, gauge group members' interest in encouraging the parish to join or start one.
- How can we educate our families and friends about the problem of malaria?
- What other ways can you think of to act?
- Invite group members to take the

Closing the Time

Thank participants for attending. Close the time in prayer, using your own words or a prayer such as the following by Rt. Rev. Trevor Huddleston:

God bless Africa,
Guard her people,
Guide her leaders,
And give her peace.

Following Up

Your thoughts about this discussion and guide are important to us. Please email inspiration@er-d.org or call 800.334.7626, ext. 5129 if you have comments. We want to know about your experience in holding a discussion and any ways in which this guide might be improved. Thank you!

Resources for Information and Action

- Episcopal Relief & Development: www.er-d.org
- The *NetsforLife*® Inspiration Fund Campaign: www.inspirationfund.org
- *NetsforLife*® Inspiration Fund Toolkit: <http://www.inspirationfund.org/get-involved-o>
- World Health Organization: www.who.int
- The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria: www.theglobalfund.org