

Alternative Gift Market: Virtual Event Guide

A Note: This guide is a set of suggestions. You are encouraged to tailor this event to the needs, strengths and culture of your congregation.

Before the Event Begins:

- Decide who will host the live event. This can be an individual or group hosting opportunity. Great hosts could include youth and teenagers, the outreach committee, the entertainers within your congregation, or yourself!
- Set up the event on Zoom.
- Send out the event information to the congregation. In the invitation, include any special directions they'll need to know for the event, such as:
 - Have the *Gifts for Life* [catalog](#) open in your browser during the event.
 - Have a candle on hand. (You can even recommend making a [DIY Advent Wreath](#) and having it nearby during the event.)
- If presenting solo, secure a helper to monitor chat and any technical issues.
- Send out a reminder a day before the event.
- On the day of the event, prepare by opening each video you will be using in an individual tab in your web browser so that they're ready to go during the event.

Event Agenda:

5 minutes: Opening Prayer & Lighting of the Candle

- Opening Prayer Examples:
 - [Collects: Traditional](#) (choose the Collect from the closest Sunday)
 - [Collects: Contemporary](#) (choose the Collect from the closest Sunday)
 - A prayer written and led by a youth or family of the congregation
- Lighting of the Candle:
 - Invite participants to light the Advent candle of the closest Sunday (or a plain candle, if that's what they have available).
 - Share the corresponding Scripture reading and Reflection from the [ONE THOUSAND DAYS OF LOVE Advent Wreath Prayer Kit](#).

15 minutes: Welcome & Introduction

- Introduce yourself and/or your group. Share why this event is important to you. If your congregation hosted an Alternative Gift Market in the past, you may want to share how much they raised previously (it encourages people to meet that amount or exceed it!).
- Introduce Episcopal Relief & Development through this [video](#).
- Ask attendees (choose whether they should speak or chat their answers):
 - What excited you in the video? Did you learn something new about Episcopal Relief & Development?
 - What sorts of activities did you see in the video?
 - Does anyone remember how many people Episcopal Relief & Development serves annually? (*Answer: 3 million*)
 - Does anyone remember what was mentioned about how congregations can support Episcopal Relief & Development during Advent? (*Answer: Our congregation can join together and send Gifts for Life this Advent – and give people all over the world the chance to transform their lives in lasting ways.*)

25 minutes: Gifts for Life

- “A Stroll Through the Market” – Now it’s time to visit the market and select our gifts! During this time, we’ll take a few closer looks into what our gifts can do.
 - During this market stroll, you might decide to go ahead and make a gift. When you do, it’s very important that you enter our congregation name and city in the “Organization” field on the checkout page.
 - Have a checkout page open and share screen to demonstrate.
 - After sharing screen and demonstrating, post the link to the catalog in the chat: <https://support.episcopalrelief.org/gifts>
 - **Market Section: For Children**
 - **Watch** [Early Childhood Development video](#).
 - **Ask:**
 - What do you think of Catherine and her work?
 - What sorts of activities did you notice in the video?
 - **Gifts to Support this Work include:**
 - If you’d like to support Catherine and other Early Childhood Promoters throughout the world, you can give:
 - *For Children with Special Needs* (\$75 per child): Access to hearing aids, glasses and other assistive devices is life-changing to physically challenged children; give them the opportunity to participate meaningfully in community life.
 - *Care for Moms & Newborns* (\$35 per mother and child): Provide expectant mothers and newborns, who are most vulnerable to infectious diseases, with the basic information, medicine and nutrition they need to stay healthy.

- *Nurture & Nourish the Earliest Learners* (\$15 per child): Help kids develop thinking, communication, social, emotional and motor skills through caregiver support and learning groups that promote healthy eating and family play.
- *Bicycle* (\$95 per bike): Help community volunteers in rural areas cover greater distances, reach more homes and spend more time with children and their families.
- *Vitamins & Preventative Medicine* (\$65 per share): Ensure children receive the vitamins, nutrients and preventive care needed to protect against illness and infection, as well as build a strong foundation for healthy growth.
- **Market Section: For Women**
 - **Watch** [Micro-Finance Program – Honduras video](#)
 - **Ask:**
 - How did the micro-finance program affect the whole community?
 - What do you think the effects would be if more micro-finance programs for women existed?
 - **Gifts to Support this Work include:**
 - If you'd like to support Episcopal Relief & Development's programs to support women, you can give:
 - *Micro-Credit Loans for Women* (\$200 per loan): Invest in women-owned businesses! Through micro-credit loans and training, you'll help women increase their income, become independent and save for the future.
 - *Savings & Loan Groups for Women* (\$60 per member): Empower women as they gain confidence in a safe space to save while setting group rules, managing their household finances and accessing micro-loans to meet their families' needs.
 - *Literacy Groups* (\$25 per student): Empower women in their decision-making processes by teaching them reading and writing, as well as educating them about government and financial institutions.
 - *Vocational Training* (\$100 per student): Provide women with opportunities to learn critical job skills that will help them gain confidence and financial independence.
- **Market Section: To Foster Resilience**
 - **Watch** [Expanding a Culture of Resilience in Nicaragua video](#)
 - **Ask:**
 - Did anything in this video surprise you?

- Why is climate resilience important?
- **Gifts to Support this Work include:**
 - If you'd like to support Episcopal Relief & Development's climate resilience work, you can give the below and more:
 - *Seeds, Tools, and Training* (\$45 per share): Communities can thrive with seeds, climate-smart agricultural training and quality farming tools to cultivate a sustainable food supply.
 - *Fruit Trees* (\$35 per share): Passion fruit, mango, avocado and banana trees provide a long-term, sustainable source of nutrition and income—and can be planted on hillsides for erosion control.
 - *Goat* (\$80 per goat): Give sustainability — as goats are hardy, reproduce quickly and can be raised in many climates to produce staple items such as milk, cheese and manure for farming.
 - *Flock of Chickens* (\$25 per share): Help train families and community groups to raise poultry and sell surplus stock and eggs in the marketplace.
 - **Market Section: COVID-19 Relief**
 - I know many people are concerned with COVID-19 relief right now, so I also want to let you know that, this year, a gift of COVID-19 Relief Kits is available for \$45 per one kit. These kits help Episcopal Relief & Development enable our partners to have the resources and knowledge to prevent and reduce coronavirus transmission through health messaging campaigns and safely provide essential relief supplies to assist communities still suffering from the pandemic.

10 minutes: Gift Reflections & Instructions

- **Ask:**
 - Which gifts speak most to you?
 - Has anyone ever given a gift from *Gifts for Life* before? If so, what was it and why did you choose that?
 - How do you think your gift will support God's vision for this world?
 - Why might you give a gift on behalf of someone?
- **Activity: Virtual or In-Person Bulletin Board**
 - Decide if you would like to have a virtual (such as a [Google Jamboard](#)) or in-person bulletin board, where you can hang up photos for each gift given.
 - If virtual, share the Jamboard link and encourage families to add a photo for each gift. (Both photo and photos of drawn images okay!)

- If in-person, ask the children to draw the gifts during Sunday School or have families bring in photos.
- **Instructions Before You Go:**
 - Encourage attendees to make their gifts now or within the next few minutes after exploring the catalog further.
 - Show the order page with the congregation name and city listed under “Organization” again.

5 minutes: Closing Prayer

- Closing Prayer Examples:
 - [Collects: Traditional](#) (choose the Collect from the closest Sunday)
 - [Collects: Contemporary](#) (choose the Collect from the closest Sunday)
 - A prayer written and led by a youth or family of the congregation

After the Event Ends:

- Send a follow-up email to attendees thanking them for attending. Include helpful reminders, such as:
 - The link to the [catalog](#) site.
 - To enter their congregation name and city under “Organization” on the Order page.
 - To add photos to the Jamboard for each gift they purchase or to participate in the in-person bulletin board.