

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES USA

POVERTY INITIATIVE

I TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WHATEVER YOU
DID FOR ONE OF THE LEAST OF THESE
BROTHERS OF MINE, YOU DID FOR ME.
MATTHEW 25:40

DONATION PLATE LETTER OFFERING

Proverbs 31:8-9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Holding a letter drive at your church is fun and exciting. It is a way for your congregation to show concern for those living in poverty in the United States and around the world.

The donation plate letter offering is simple because you can start it and complete it in one church service. Simply hand out the letters as the congregation is entering, ask them to sign their letter and drop the signed letter in the donation plates as they are being circulated. Below are some step-by-step instructions to make your letter offering even simpler.

STEP ONE: Choose a date for your event in the month of October.

- Touch base with your church leadership to schedule a date that will work for you as well as your congregation. Check to see if there's a way this event can be advertised on the church website or in the newsletter. This kind of "heads-up" will create a buzz around your event and save you some explaining on the day of the offering.
- Talk to the staff about printing instructions in the bulletin on the Sunday you choose. For example: "At the door this morning, you were given a letter to your representative encouraging him/her to take a stand in the fight against poverty. Please take a moment to read over the letter, sign it, fold it letter style, and place it in the offering plate as it passes. With this simple signature, you are helping to raise awareness about God's children living in poverty across the country."
- Ask your pastor if he or she would be comfortable saying a few words from the pulpit when your offering takes place, helping the congregation understand the church's concern for people living in poverty. The more people in-the-know, the better your event will go.

STEP TWO: Print your letters and gather your materials.

On page 3 you will find a copy of the letter. Be sure to fill in the name of your representatives and your congregation BEFORE you print out the letters – the less work for your congregation, the better! When in doubt about how many to print, always over-estimate. It is always a good idea to have extra letters in case people want to take more than one.

STEP THREE: Be prepared on the day of the offering.

- Arrive 30-40 minutes early in order to distribute letters to those arriving early. Solicit helpers so that you cover every entrance into your worship space. Make yourselves noticeable by wearing buttons, shirts, or hats (whatever is appropriate for the formality of your service) designating your group as the “distributors.”
- When handing out your letters, give a *brief* explanation of what you would like them to do. For example, “Please take a moment to sign this letter expressing our concern for people living in poverty.” Share this with everyone who is helping you distribute so that everyone who receives a letter has an idea of what it’s about.
- Tell the ushers ahead of time that you’ll be coming at the end of the service to collect the letters. After the service is over, have your team collect and seal the letters in an envelope, addressed to the representative to which the letters were written. To make this easier, print out address labels ahead of time and have stamps ready. You’ll be finished in no time!

Please contact the NCC with any questions you may have regarding this event at povertyinfo@nccusa.org. Keep in mind that the offering and all the work surrounding it should bring awareness and help to our brothers and sisters who are suffering at the hands of poverty.



www.FightingPovertyWithFaith.com



Senator/Congressman _____:

The congregation of _____ would like to make known our stance in the fight against poverty. As people of faith, we believe that it is our moral responsibility to advocate for those living in poverty. Proverbs 31: 8-9 tells us to “speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.” We ask you to join us in this fight against poverty with your vote and your voice while you represent all of us at _____ Church.

We believe that, if we continue to reach out to those in need and do our part to help them out of poverty, real change can happen. Please keep in mind the impoverished of our nation when considering issues of homelessness, affordable housing, unemployment insurance, child nutrition and others that directly affect the “poor and needy” in our nation. We appreciate all you do for our state and our country.

Blessings,

Name

Address

Congregation name