This guide walks you through the various components of The Easter Journey and how to use them in your own church. Included are detailed instructions on how to participate, a working timeline, a list of weekly themes and scriptures, ideas for moving forward, and examples of downloadable resources. Waiting for Water provides all these materials to your church at no cost.
Contents

Introduction ......................................................................................................................................... 3
Weekly themes and scripture passages ................................................................................ 4
Printable checklist ........................................................................................................................... 5
How to implement The Easter Journey in your church ................................................................. 6
Frequently asked questions ............................................................................................................. 11
Now what: where to go from here ................................................................................................. 13
Appendices ......................................................................................................................................... 15

List of Appendices

List of resources available on our website
Sample Bible study sign-up sheet
Sample Bible study
Sample sermon aid
Tabletop calendar
Children’s Easter countdown chain
Children’s art project
Collection container label
Promotional poster
The Easter Journey feedback form

“A friend of mine went on the Waiting for Water website after hearing about the program at her church. She told me that while she watched the video, she was given a feeling of hope. The simple message that we can all do something, but together we can make a real difference in the world, moved her to tears.” –Pat Klever, Lifewater International
Introduction

Waiting for Water is an ecumenical network of Christians who recognize that millions of people around the world are still waiting for access to safe water. That is why we are mobilizing followers of Jesus to provide clean water during the Lenten and Easter season. On our website, we provide free resources for churches and individuals to use as they participate in Waiting for Water’s Easter Journey. Participants in The Easter Journey

- encounter and respond to Christ through weekly Bible studies and devotionals
- learn about the global water crisis and discover ways to serve their local communities
  - take action by giving up a favorite beverage or activity during Lent and donating the money saved to provide safe water

To learn more about Waiting for Water, join our network, and download free resources, please visit our website at www.waitingforwater.org.

How can churches participate?

Together, your whole church can take The Easter Journey. This guide, along with the Bible studies and sermon aids on our website, will equip your church members to

- give up a favorite beverage or activity during Lent and donate the money saved in marked collection containers to provide safe water
- participate in weekly Bible studies centered around the theme of “Encountering Jesus and responding with compassion”
- learn from weekend sermons which incorporate the same themes
- collect the money saved and celebrate Easter like never before
- dive into an optional three-week response period focused on local action after Easter

What does this guide contain?

Using this guide, you can implement The Easter Journey in your congregation. Here you will find an overview of the weekly themes and scriptures, followed by a printable chronological checklist to help you prepare and implement The Easter Journey at your church. Our set of detailed instructions for The Easter Journey and frequently asked questions take you through all the nitty-gritty details of implementation. The last narrative section gives you some inspiration for long-term action. Finally, you will find a valuable appendix chock-full of printable resources. These include a promotional poster, collection cup label, bulletin insert, and children’s activities. You will also find a sample Bible study, sermon aid, and small group sign-up sheet as well as a full list of resources available on our website.¹

¹ All resources are available for download at no cost from the resources section of our website at http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/take-action. Bible studies can be downloaded as PDFs, or you can order multiple printed and bound copies through a third-party website. See page seven for more details.
Weekly themes and scripture passages

Encounters with Jesus, Responding With Compassion

Jesus caused a response from every encounter he had. In a word, he was unforgettable. Some who met Jesus left feeling loved. Some left feeling frustrated and angry. Some confused. Some healed. Some forgiven. In all of these encounters, we learn about Jesus and his mission. We also discover things about ourselves and God’s mission in the world. This study is designed specifically to reflect on how to respond to the need for safe water throughout the world. Each week, the study will open with a situation that describes a present need for water in the world. As you reflect on your personal response to Jesus, you’ll be challenged to consider how that response might impact the way you can help to provide safe water to those in need.

THE EASTER JOURNEY WEEKLY THEMES

- **Week One: Mary  Luke 1:39-56**  As you explore Mary’s response to God for bringing Jesus into her life, consider how her song reveals God’s character and our call to model that character in the world.
- **Week Two: Simeon and Anna  Luke 2:21-40**  After years of waiting, Simeon and Anna saw Jesus as an eight-day-old baby and in response, they told the world about Jesus’ mission.
- **Week Three: People of Nazareth  Luke 4:14-30**  When Jesus made a radical claim that he was bringing God’s kingdom to everyone, how did the people respond? They wanted to throw him off a cliff!
- **Week Four: Unnamed Sinful Woman and Simon  Luke 7:36-50**  Jesus attracted all kinds of people: the religious rulers who invited Jesus into their homes in order to test his theology and lifestyle, and others who were drawn to Jesus out of a deep need for love and forgiveness.
- **Week Five: Crippled Woman and the Religious Ruler  Luke 13: 10-17**  Jesus had a way of pointing out the religious leaders’ hypocrisy at those times when the religious leaders were trying to point out how Jesus was not very religious.
- **Week Six (Palm Sunday): Ten Lepers  Luke 17:11-19**  As Jesus headed toward Jerusalem where he would eventually encounter crowds of people shouting “Hosanna,” ten lepers shouted his name calling for “Mercy.”
- **Week Seven (Easter): An Easter Story: Zacchaeus  Luke 19:1-10**  The transformation of a tax collector named Zacchaeus offers hope to all who feel as though they’ve simply done too much for God to actually forgive them.

RESPONDING TO EASTER: A OPTIONAL THREE-WEEK JOURNEY

- **Week Eight: A Man Named Barnabas  Acts 4:32-37**  Barnabas and his whole community of Christians saw their relationship with God as a call to care for people in need.
- **Week Nine: A Man Named Stephen  Acts 6**  The apostles commissioned Stephen to care for the widows, and his response to the resurrection developed into a life of service.
- **Week Ten: A Man Named Peter  Acts 10**  Peter encountered Jesus repeatedly and with power. But even Peter did not understand the full extent of God’s love until he had a dream that showed him just how inclusive God’s love would become.
Printable checklist

Print this checklist and refer to it often as you prepare for and participate in The Easter Journey.

**Step one: get ready**  
**Time frame: prior to January 27, 2013**
- Read through this resource guide and explore [www.waitingforwater.org](http://www.waitingforwater.org)
- Decide whether to use 7- or 10-week program
- Pastor: download sermon aids from website to use in message planning
- Recruit 4 Team Leaders for the following: small groups, resources, funds management, and promotion
- **Small groups leader:** prepare sign-ups for Lenten Bible study groups and begin recruiting of group leaders and members
- **Resource team leader:** download small group Bible studies (or order published Bible studies; see website) and copy collection cup labels and posters
- **Gather collection container(s) for the church, such as empty 5-gallon water bottles**
- **Optional: make copies of the tabletop calendar and children’s Easter countdown chain from the appendices section of this guide**

**Step two: get your church ready**  
**Time frame: 3 Sundays, January 27 – February 10, 2013**
- Introduce The Easter Journey to congregation by showing the video several times
- **Promotional team leader:** create display using poster, sample collection container
- **Distribute collection container labels for people to use at home**
- **Small groups team leader:** launch sign-ups for Lenten Bible studies; identify group leaders and assign people to groups
- **Small group leaders contact each member assigned to their group with meeting info**
- **Optional: distribute copies of the tabletop calendar and children’s Easter countdown chain for people to use at home**

**Step three: take action**  
**Time frame: 6 Sundays, February 17 – March 24, 2013**
- During services each week, show the video and use weekly sermon aids
- **Funds management team leader:** collect, tally, and turn in funds from collection containers each week
- **Begin weekly small group Bible studies**
- **Optional: incorporate our liturgical worship aids into weekly services**
- **Optional: observe World Water Day on Sunday, March 17 (see page 9 for ideas)**

**Step four: celebrate Easter**  
**Time frame: March 31, 2013**
- Celebrate the resurrection! Incorporate this week’s sermon aids in your worship Service
- Remind people to make final contributions and announce how funds will be used

**Step five: follow through**  
**Time frame: April 7 – April 21, 2013**
- 10-week option: participate in the additional 3 weeks of Bible studies and sermons which emphasize compassionate response in your local community
- Share the total amount of funds raised with your congregation
- Make your gift to provide safe water
- Access the resources and ideas found in the “Now what” section of this guide
- Develop a plan for how your church will continue to provide safe water in the world
- **Optional: celebrate your Easter Journey as a congregation through a potluck, community carnival, or other special event.**
How to implement *The Easter Journey* in your church

Here you will find more detailed instructions on how to guide your church through participating in *The Easter Journey*. These instructions are divided into five sections, or steps, which correspond with the *Printable checklist* provided on page five.

**Step one: get ready**

**Time frame: prior to January 27, 2013**

Read through this guide and explore www.waitingforwater.org. This is the first step in preparing for *The Easter Journey*. In addition to detailed instructions and a time line, you will find many helpful resources and ideas to make your journey successful. It is optimum to complete this step during the month of November, before the Advent season, to assure time to recruit Team Leaders and make plans for registration on January 27, 2013. We also recommend downloading the sermon aids from the website well in advance for sermon preparation.

Decide on a 7-week or 10-week program. The main group of resources focuses on the 7 weeks of Lent and Easter. These small group Bible studies and sermon aids help church members encounter Jesus and respond with compassion by providing safe water in the world. For churches that want to extend their involvement, we have created an additional 3-week module focused on showing compassion in the local community. Some churches will want to end their Easter Journey with the week of Easter (7 week program) and others will decide to turn their efforts toward local ministry for 3 more weeks (10 week program). Regardless of which you choose, be sure to review the “Now what?” section of this guide for help in long-term engagement.

Decide which water agency you will support. On our website, we provide a list of faith-based organizations which are providing safe water throughout the world. You may choose to support any of these agencies or another agency with which your church has a relationship. In the past several churches have also chosen to give their gifts to Waiting for Water and asked us to divide the funds amongst our nonprofit partners.

Recruit a team. You should recruit 4 people to be team leaders in the following areas: small groups, resources, funds management, and promotion. Their job descriptions are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Leader Job Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Small Groups</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recruits group leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>manages sign-up process for Bible study groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assigns group leaders and members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resources. All of the resources your church will need to participate in The Easter Journey can be downloaded free of charge from Waiting for Water’s website. Following is a list of the resources which will be available to you after November 1, 2012:

- Bible studies
- sermon aids
- liturgical worship aids
- printable tabletop calendar
- children’s Easter countdown chain activity
- children’s art project
- collection container labels
- promotional poster
- three-minute promotional video
- PowerPoint announcement slide
- Printable bulletin insert

Published Bible studies. In addition to the option of printing and copying materials from our website, this year we are offering an exciting alternative: published small group booklets. Churches who do not wish to print and copy all of the Bible studies for their congregations will have the option of ordering as many printed and bound copies as they need through lulu.com, a third-party publisher. We anticipate the cost per booklet will be around ten dollars, and will save your church many hours of time and reams of paper. Published small group Bible studies will be available for order after November 1, 2012, through a link on the “Take Action” section of our website. Churches should place their orders no later than February 7, 2013, to ensure on-time delivery.

Collection containers. Five-gallon water bottles like the one pictured at right make ideal collection containers for church congregations. People collecting money at home can affix an Easter Journey label to something as simple as a plastic cup.

Step two: get your church ready

Time frame: 3 Sundays, January 27 – February 10, 2013

Introduce The Easter Journey to the congregation on the three consecutive Sundays leading up to Lent. We offer the following resources to help you in your efforts:

- two-minute video (available for download on website; you’ll find instructions there)
- PowerPoint announcement slide (available for download from the resources section of the website)
- bulletin insert (included in the appendices section of this guide or by download from the website)
• Waiting for Water poster and water bottle labels (located in the appendices section of this guide)

**Share the following key points with your congregation:**

• **Turn your beverage (or activity) into safe water.** Give up a favorite beverage or activity during Lent and donate the money saved in marked collection containers (at church and home) to provide safe water. Options are almost limitless but include giving up coffee, soda, restaurant meals, or trips to the movies.

• **Participate in weekly Bible studies.** Each week is centered on the theme of “Encountering Jesus and responding with compassion.” Participants study the Bible together, hear stories from people affected by the global water crisis, and learn how to respond by making a difference.

• **Collect the money saved and celebrate Easter like never before.** Gifts from the whole congregation will be pooled together on Easter Sunday to provide safe water through a Christian water organization.

• **Launch into long-term action.** _The Easter Journey_ will equip your congregation to continue responding to global and local needs.

**Promotion team leader:** Create a display at the church using the poster, sample collection containers with labels and other creative elements. The display can be set up on January 27 and remain throughout the Easter Journey. Be sure to email us a photo of your display!

  _Optional: Distribute copies of tabletop calendars and children’s Easter countdown chain (found in the appendices) for people to use at home._

**Small groups team leader:** Launch sign-ups for small groups at church or online. The information collected for sign-ups should include name, phone number, email address, and the days and times each person is available to meet. (Sample sign-up sheet is available in the appendices.) After reviewing the sign-ups, the team leader places the registrants in groups (approximately 8-12 members), appoints a leader for each group and asks each group leader to make personal contact with everyone in their group by phone or e-mail to supply details about when and where the small group will be held. The first week of small groups follows Sunday, February 17, 2013.

  _Alternative: If there are existing small groups in the church which want to participate in The Easter Journey, the small groups team leader should just orient them and ensure they have Bible study booklets in hand by February 17._

**Resource team leader:** Distribute labels to be affixed to beverage containers in the homes of the congregation. Varied beverage containers can be used such as personal water bottles, soda bottles, milk cartons, or 5-gallon water delivery bottles.

**Step three: take action**

**Time frame:** 6 Sundays, February 17 – March 24, 2013

**Incorporate the Sermon Aids** designed for each of the Sunday services.

  _Optional: Incorporate liturgical worship aids into weekly services which are available on website._
**Funds management leader:** Each week, collect and tally funds from collection containers. For purposes of integrity, we strongly suggest you involve two people in this task, and that they turn in a tally of money collected to the pastor/secretary each Sunday before leaving church. Before turning funds in to the church, you can take change to a coin machine, located at many grocery stores, to be automatically sorted, counted and redeemed in cash for a small percentage. Coins can also be cashed in at banks if they are rolled and labeled properly in wrappers provided at banks. Continue to track total of funds collected throughout *The Journey* and ensure your record-keeping matches that of the church office.

**Bible Study groups** begin meeting each week.

---

**World Water Day**

*World Water Day is observed all over the world every year on March 22. Consider joining in this observance as a congregation. If your church supports missionaries or development workers in areas where safe water is an urgent need, you can highlight their work and also heighten general awareness.*


---

**Step four: celebrate Easter**

**Time frame: March 31, 2013**

**Incorporate the Easter Sermon Aids** in your worship Service.

**Announce total of current contributions** and remind people to make final donations. Explain how the funds will be used. If using the 10-week program, explain to the congregation how the next 3 weeks will give them an opportunity to show compassion in their local community. The congregation can continue to donate change during the next 3 weeks to be donated locally, or other methods can be used to give to your community. (Ideas are found in the “Now What” section in this guide.)

**Small groups meet for the final time.** This is the last week of the 7-week study.

---

**Step five: follow through**

**Time frame: April 7 – April 21, 2013**

**If using 10-week program, incorporate sermon aids** in worship services. Small groups continue with Bible Studies focusing on showing compassion to local community.
Funds Management Team Leader: Announce total amount raised by congregation to provide safe water and works with church staff to donate funds to water agency of church’s choice.

Have a party! This is an excellent time to celebrate what God has done in your congregation in the past 7 or 10 weeks. Organize a potluck, carnival, block party, or dessert social, and encourage members to invite their friends and neighbors.

Give us your feedback. Email your assessment of the program (found in the appendices section), including inspirational stories, the amount that you donated to provide safe water, pictures, and constructive criticism, to waitingforwater@gmail.com.

Move forward. It may be appropriate to appoint a committee to consider ways that the church can continue to support the expansion of safe water or other local needs in the community. The “Now What” section in this guide can help generate ideas and action.
Frequently asked questions

1. **What resources do you offer?**
   We offer a wide variety of free resources for churches, small groups, and individuals. For a comprehensive list, visit the resources page of our website or see the appendix to this guide.

2. **When does The Easter Journey begin?**
   The Easter Journey officially begins when Lent begins, on Ash Wednesday, February 13, 2013. However, you will want to begin preparing well before then; this guide provides a timeline and walks you through all the steps of preparing for and participating in The Easter Journey.

3. **Is there a live person who can help me?**
   Yes! The Waiting for Water steering team is here to answer your questions and support you. Email us at waitingforwater@gmail.com and we’ll get back to you.

4. **Where do I get the Bible studies?**
   You have two options for getting small group Bible studies:
   - Download and print out the PDFs from our website at [http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/take-action](http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/take-action). This is appropriate for churches that don’t need too many copies of the studies.
   - Order the number of printed and bound Bible studies your church will need. Copying and assembling hundreds of Bible studies is not practical for many churches. We provide a link to a third-party publisher from the resources page of our website where you can simply order the number of studies you need and have them delivered to your door. We expect the cost per booklet will be approximately ten dollars; you can choose to pass this cost on to your church members or subsidize it from the church budget.

5. **Do I have to use the sermon aids?**
   No, you don’t. Some pastors find these aids helpful in planning their sermon series and making sure they are giving a unified message to their congregations during The Easter Journey. However, the sermon aids are just meant to be used as helpful tools and are not essential for a successful experience.

6. **Why should my church participate in The Easter Journey?**
   Pastors and church leaders want to see their people grow as followers of Christ and become more outwardly focused. The Easter Journey helps you reach that goal by providing free, high-quality resources and a comprehensive guide to implementation. You also gain access to multiple high-quality Christian organizations with whom your church can partner to make a real difference. (For more ideas on nonprofit partnerships, see page 12.)

7. **How do I get printable resources like posters and collection container labels?**
   The Appendices section of this guide gives you printable copies of the Waiting for Water poster, collection container labels, and children’s activities.

8. **How do I get electronic resources like the video and announcement slide?**
   For the announcement slide, which is in PowerPoint format, go to the “basic resources” section of our website at [http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/take-action/basic-resources](http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/take-action/basic-resources). For the video, ensure you are connected to the Internet and go to our YouTube channel at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGvbS5-PIJs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tGvbS5-PIJs). Select the 2013 Easter video, and when you are
ready to share it, click “play.” To make the video fill your entire screen, click the “full screen” icon in the lower right-hand corner of the video player.

9. **What if we want to support an organization not listed on your website?**
   Go for it! If your church already has a relationship with a nonprofit organization which is providing safe water in the world, we encourage you to keep that relationship going and apply funds raised to that organization’s work.

10. **I have another question not listed here.**
    Our website can answer most questions, but you can always feel free to email us directly at waitingforwater@gmail.com.
Now what: where to go from here

Congratulations on finishing your Easter Journey! However, we hope that this experience serves not as an end, but a launching point into new and exciting forms of ministry for your church. You’ve already seen that your congregation can work together to grow as followers of Christ and make a real difference in the global water crisis. We hope you will continue doing acts of compassion, both globally and locally. Following are several ideas to get you started; please share your own stories, ideas, and photos with us by emailing waitingforwater@gmail.com.

Global response. Continue the momentum you have started by sharing Christ’s love with a world in need. If you don’t already have a successful international ministry program, we suggest you take advantage of the expertise and connections already available to you through partnership with a Christian nonprofit organization. There are many nonprofit organizations working to make a difference in the global water crisis in Christ’s name. Several of them are listed on our website.2 Your church can serve a vital Kingdom role as you link with one of these organizations. Following are just some of the ways you can partner:

a. **Form long-term relationships.** Several nonprofit organizations link North American churches in long-term relationships with churches in areas where safe water is a primary need. The churches often form mutually helpful friendships which extend for years and branch out to meet other needs beyond just safe water. Healing Waters International ([www.HealingWaters.org](http://www.HealingWaters.org)) is an excellent example of an organization which is facilitating this type of healthy, long-term relationship.

b. **Volunteer.** Many church members are eager to volunteer their time in worthy causes, and many churches regularly send out teams on overseas trips; consider helping your members to become highly skilled volunteers for a nonprofit organization. Living Water International ([www.water.cc](http://www.water.cc)) and Lifewater International ([www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org)) both make extensive use of volunteers.

c. **Advocate.** Your church can raise its voice to advocate on behalf of those who are poor and thirsty in our world today. Sponsor an athletic event, form a water action group, or hold a water carnival. The Water Project ([thewaterproject.org](http://thewaterproject.org)) and Blood:Water Mission ([www.bloodwatermission.com](http://www.bloodwatermission.com)) both offer many resources to equip you for advocacy.

Local response. As your local church engages globally, it can also impact its own community. We suggest looking for ways to forge long-term, focused relationships in your community. Following are just a few suggestions for kick-starting your own local outreach:

- Partner with another local church to dedicate a larger portion of your churches’ budgets to outreach activities in the next year, and hold each other accountable. Plan joint outreachs, and celebrate together when you reach your shared budget goal.

---

• Form a long-term relationship with a local school; work with school staff to determine how your church can help out and follow through. Possibilities include playground maintenance, back-to-school supplies, after-school tutoring, and teacher appreciation.

• Resolve to become the best friend your city ever had. Contact the mayor’s office to learn of volunteer opportunities such as park clean-up or graffiti removal.

• Host a sports league, such as Upward basketball (www.upward.org), and blow your participants away with hospitality and fun!

• Every August, hold a single parents’ fair. Offer school supplies, free oil changes, basic health screenings, or kids’ haircuts. If your church is small, partner with another church or group of churches to pull it off.

• Engage your seniors. If your church has active older adults, consider starting a Seniors in Service group which can plan and lead various outreaches in your area. These might include reading to schoolchildren or collecting items for a pregnancy care center or low-income preschool.

Figure 3. Photo by Carol Nowlin
Appendices

(CURRENTLY UNDER DEVELOPMENT; WILL BE ADDED BY NOVEMBER 1, 2012)

1. List of resources available on our website
2. Sample Bible study sign-up sheet
3. Sample Bible study
4. Sample sermon aid
5. Tabletop calendar
6. Children’s Easter countdown chain
7. Children’s art project
8. Collection container label
9. Promotional poster
10. The Easter Journey feedback form

\[ii\] For information on how to donate to Waiting for Water, see http://www.waitingforwater.org/#/connect.