

Self-Development of People

Adult Lesson Plan

Teaching Proposition

SDOP works to dismantle structures and systems that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice by forming partnerships with economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged community groups seeking to engage in long term projects from which they will directly benefit, own and control so that we live into the Biblical mandate to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God.

Texts

- Micah 6:8

Leader Preparation – In Person Teaching

- Make copies of Appendix A (if you are not using class or personal bibles)
- Make copies of handout of Appendix B, C and D
- If you are using a PowerPoint, access Appendix E. Appendix D not necessary if using PowerPoint

Leader Preparation – Virtual Teaching

- If you are using PowerPoint, access Appendix E.
- If you are not using PowerPoint, prepare to email Appendices A and E to participants or post them in the chat function of your Videoconferencing platform
- Ensure the settings on your Videoconferencing platform are configured for the best sound and video if you sharing screen.
- Download video and test it on equipment

Resources and Materials – In Person Teaching

- Paper and writing utensils
- If using PowerPoint in Appendix E, none of the following are necessary. If not using PowerPoint then,
 - Bibles or Copies of the handout from Appendix A
 - Dry Erase Board and Markers or Newsprint paper and markers
 - AV equipment if you are using the video as a part of the session
 - Appendix B
 - Appendix C
 - Appendix D

Resources and Materials – Virtual Teaching

- Open PowerPoint, which include all Appendices so you are ready to screen share.
- Open video on computer so it is ready to show in screen share.
- Remind participants to have plain paper and markers on hand for this session.

Quick Glance of the Teaching Outline -

5 min	Welcome and Opening Prayer
15 min	Systems and structures that perpetuate injustice
15 min	Exploring the biblical mandate
15 min	Dismantling and perpetuating justice through SDOP
5 min	Discerning your place in the journey of justice
5 min	Closing Litany

Arrive early to set out bibles and arrange the seats in a way that is conducive to today's session, your teaching style and the participants' learning styles. If teaching in person and using the PowerPoint, connect the computer and projection equipment and test video. If teaching virtually, test technology; tend to visuals such as lighting, background and sound; and email appendices or handouts to participants. Open on your computer and have ready any items you will use in screen share mode.

Gathering Ritual (5 minutes)

Welcome people as they arrive in person or virtually. When it is time to begin, invite participants to join you in prayer or your regular opening ritual. You may use this prayer or invite participants to share their joys and concerns, then lead them in prayer.

God of justice, compassion and peace, we come before you this morning in a spirit of gratitude and praise. As we gather in our communities of faith, we give thanks for the gifts of calm hearts and still minds, given to us through the presence of your Holy Spirit, as we hear your message and receive your guidance. Remind us, Lord, of our connectedness and our responsibilities to each other. As we gather in worship, may your divine love inspire us to lead lives of kindness, peace and justice. May your Holy Spirit bring hope and empowerment to communities of need everywhere, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Introduce yourself and invite others to briefly introduce themselves.

Dismantling systems and structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice (15 minutes)

In this section of the session, you are answering the question – “what do you want participants to understand about structures and systems that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice?” In order to contextualize this, research and include some statistics from the city and state where you are teaching.

Ask each person to take a piece of paper and think about their family's budget. They do not have to say the numbers aloud but jot down for each month/annually, how much they spend on

- Housing
- Transportation
- Childcare
- Food
- Health Insurance
- Clothing and other essential personal items

Now consider what you spent on those items when you were first starting out as a young adult - before your had children. Ask them to make a few notes on their annual costs.

Then share:

- The national minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour
- If someone works 40 hours a week, they make \$290.00 a week before taxes and bring home around \$260
- This means \$1,160 a month or \$15,080.00 IF – you have no sick days for yourself or family members, not vacation and your hourly employer guarantees you the 40 hours a week.
- The government national threshold for poverty is \$17,420 for a family of 2.

Ask

- How did you do?
- Were you able to make your budget work on that annual salary?
- What do you have to choose between in order to live within this budget?
- What factors affect the ability to earn more money or cut more from your budget?

Transition into the video by explaining it is always best to hear the stories of people who actually live in the context we are exploring. Let's listen to the story of this mother...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SCB1t28nDU&t=28s>

Move into the next section of the session and consider incorporating the following Teaching Points into the transition:

- Poverty is not the only area where the structures of injustice must be dismantled but its intersectionality of economics, race and gender means it manifests in a multitude of ways. In America...
 - child poverty
 - 1/3 of all children in American are poor
 - food insecurity
 - in 2018...14 million households were food insecure in 2022...50 million
 - affordable housing
 - only 1 in 4 people eligible for housing subsidy receive it...there are only 7.13 million affordable rental homes available for 11 million renters
 - “extremely low” incomes - this does not include 568,000 people who are homeless (pre-pandemic)
 - living wage
 - a living wage in 2019 was \$16.54 and yet minimum wage has remained at \$7.25 an hour since 2009 while cost of living has increased by 20%
 - childcare costs
 - the average cost of infant/toddler care is \$11,900 a year – only 1 in 7 children eligibly for national child care subsidy receive it. (average cost of in-state public university tuition is \$10,486)
 - healthcare costs
 - patient deductibles doubled between 2002-20017; medical expenses push 7 million people below the poverty line each year and while ACA subsidies are available, they often limit access to hospitals and doctors
- These grim statistics that are all the more concerning since we live in the wealthiest nation in the world.
- It is our hope that the earlier exercise (despite the challenges on-the-spot-math presents) helped put some flesh on the numbers.

- Behind every statistic is a person, a family, a child – go greater, and no less, valuable to God.
- Behind each of these statistics is a neighbor whom Jesus commanded us to love.
- Let's spend some time looking exploring scripture to get a sense of what he meant

Living into the Biblical mandate to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God (15 minutes)

Open this section by incorporating any or all of these Teaching Points into your remarks

- On the handout (Appendix A) you will find a few of the biblical passages about justice
- While we will focus on Micah 6:8 for this lesson it is important to know that justice begins in Genesis with the foundational belief that all people are created in the image of God (Imago Dei.)
- Recognizing and honoring the Imago Dei in others fundamentally changes how we see and treat one another - personally and communally.
- Our actions and interactions tangibly reflect faithfully we are living into our own Imago Dei.
- Reformed theologian Karl Barth interpreted the Imago Dei in relational terms. He contends the image of God is manifested when we engage with others in ways consistent with right relationship with God and love of neighbor.
- Justice is a reflection of the Imago Dei – recognized and honored in the other and lived faithfully into our own.
- God's priority for justice and righteousness is so strong it is written into the laws and commandments given to God's people in the Mosaic covenant and embodied in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.
- Throughout the Gospels, Jesus takes on the God's precedence for justice - and particular care for the poor, the powerless and the marginalized – then incorporates it into the work of his disciples.
- Justice is fundamental characteristic of our covenantal relationship with God.

Ask someone to read Micah 6:6-8 aloud

Engage in dialogue with these questions

- What are the three requirements mentioned in this passage and what do you think they mean?
- Why do you think Micah used “do” with justice, “love” with kindness and “walk humbly” with God?
- What do you think is the difference between justice and charity (or kindness?)

Consider incorporating the following Teaching Points into the discussion

- Micah was a prophet sent by God to admonish the people for their unfaithfulness to the covenantal relationship.
- They broke their part of the covenant by ignoring and benefitting from injustice and putting their own self-interest first.

- Loving Kindness means we are to embody tangible acts of love that meet the concrete needs of the poor, the powerless and the marginalized thereby reflecting the steadfast love we experience in our covenantal relationship with God.
- Doing Justice means working to change and dismantle all systems that oppress, foster inequity, powerlessness or hinder any person, fashioned in the image of God, from living into the fullness for which they were created.
- Our work in both is sustained by walking humbly with God. Christian practices, such as worship, bible study, prayer, listening and telling one another our stories, compel and nurture our call to construct a world that more faithfully reflects God's best intention for it.
- This passage instructs that we LOVE charity or kindness – it is a function of the heart, but, it commands that we DO justice – whether the heart is involved or not.
- This passage lays out an Anatomy of Justice (Appendix B)– four ways in which we can begin to engage in the work scripture mandates for us
 1. Directed Service – meets the immediate, concrete needs – hunger, shelter, safety. It serves the least number of people but “stops the bleeding.”
 2. Consciousness Raising – asks the “why” question so that we can understand the root causes of injustice. This is the “gateway” – the bridge of education – which opens to deeper, faithful engagement. It broadens the circle of influence and moves people from service to advocacy.
 3. Systemic Change – eradicate those root causes and perpetuate injustice. It widens the circle so the greatest number of people benefit from an equitable and just society.
 4. Christian Practices - are the rituals and spiritual disciplines, like worship, prayer, bible student, etc., that sustain the work on justice for people of faith.
- It is important to remember that the work of justice is invitational and people can enter at any place in the Anatomy of Justice. They may be serving in a “soup kitchen” and through their relationship with those they serve and listening to their stories begin to ask the “why” question, which will ultimately lead them to working to dismantle systems that oppress. Likewise, they may enter through a bible study on Amos or Luke 4 and find themselves asking, “Where would God be frustrated with our worship today?” or “Who are the captives that need to be released today?”

Forming partnerships with economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged community groups seeking to engage in long term projects from which they will directly benefit, own and control (15 minutes)

As you move into this section on the ministry of SDOP, determine which of these Teaching Points you want to incorporate into your presentation and/or discussion

History

- In the late 1960s, as poverty and oppression continued their chokehold on disadvantaged communities, several activists, including James Forman, turned to mainline denominations to “step up” and make a difference. The Presbyterian

Church took Forman's message seriously— creating what came to be known as the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP)

Mission

- SDOP is a ministry that affirms God's concern for humankind. We are Presbyterians and ecumenical partners, dissatisfied with poverty and oppression, united in faith and action through sharing, confronting and enabling. We participate in the empowerment of economically poor, oppressed and disadvantaged people seeking to change the structures that perpetuate poverty, oppression and injustice.

Click on Matthew 25 symbol to be taken to a slide specifically for Matthew 25

- Is directly connected to the denomination's Matthew 25 Initiative: that calls all of us to actively engage in the world around us, so our faith comes alive and we wake up to new possibilities and to act boldly and compassionately to serve people who are hungry, oppressed, imprisoned or poor.
- The three foci of Matthew 25 Initiative
 1. Eradicating Poverty
 2. Dismantling Racism
 3. Congregational Vitalityand SDOP's mandates intersect to join in God's mission and ongoing transformational work in the word.

Click on Matthew 25 symbol to be taken back to the continuation of the SDOP slides

SDOP Source of Funding

- SDOP's primary source of income is approximately one-third of the One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS), a special offering taken by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to raise funds in order to partner with under resourced communities all over the world. The Presbyterian Hunger Program and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance also receive a portion of the funds.

National, International and Local

- There is a National Committee for SDOP whose members are nominated and elected by the General Assembly of the PCUSA.
- The national committee is a racially, ethnically, geographically, and increasingly generationally diverse group that meets four times a year to discuss grant applicants, learn about the areas it visits, and engage in group training.
- Applications are reviewed and relationships are built through four geographic regions: Northeast, South, Midwest and West.
- SDOP works with a limited number of international partners to broaden its work.
- Local SDOP committees based in presbyteries and synods and doing the same sort of work as SDOP at a concentrated, local level.

Grants

- May request up to \$15,000.00
- May request from national or local SDOP committees

Criteria for Funding Grants

- Envisioned, created, owned and controlled by a community of people who are economically poor and who will directly benefit from it.
- Must be "do-with" NOT an organization who "does-for."
- Addresses and seeks to correct long-term conditions that keep people bound by poverty and oppression.

- Consistent with SDOP core strategies to promote justice, build solidarity, advance human dignity and advocate for economic equity.
- Be sensitive to the environment while accomplishing its goal(s) and objectives.
- Does not include or advocate violence as a means of accomplishing its goal(s) and objectives.

Applications

- States clear goals and objectives
- Shows strategies for accomplishing the project and the ways it will directly benefit those involved.
- Identifies and describes community support, in-kind and other financial resources available beyond SDOP funding.
- Contains a balanced income and expenditure budget with a clear financial plan.
- Specifies an evaluation plan that includes how progress towards the stated goal(s) and objectives will be evaluated.

Projects Funded *(sample projects are listed by region in Appendix C)*

Discerning your call to justice (5 minutes)

Discernment about faithful living is best done in community. Use the following questions, or those of your own, to prompt honest, vulnerable and deep discussion about embodying our faith in the world. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups or in pairs. In this session we are creating space for the work of the spirit in building a bridge between what we believe and how we live. Because discipleship is a “team sport,” we do this together, in conversation with other disciples who are on this journey with us. The key is for each person, in community, to wrestle with how this new understanding of covenant will change the way we think, the way we act and who we are at the core of our being as we all seek to live into greater faithfulness.

- In what ways will you join in God’s ongoing mission of doing justice and loving kindness?

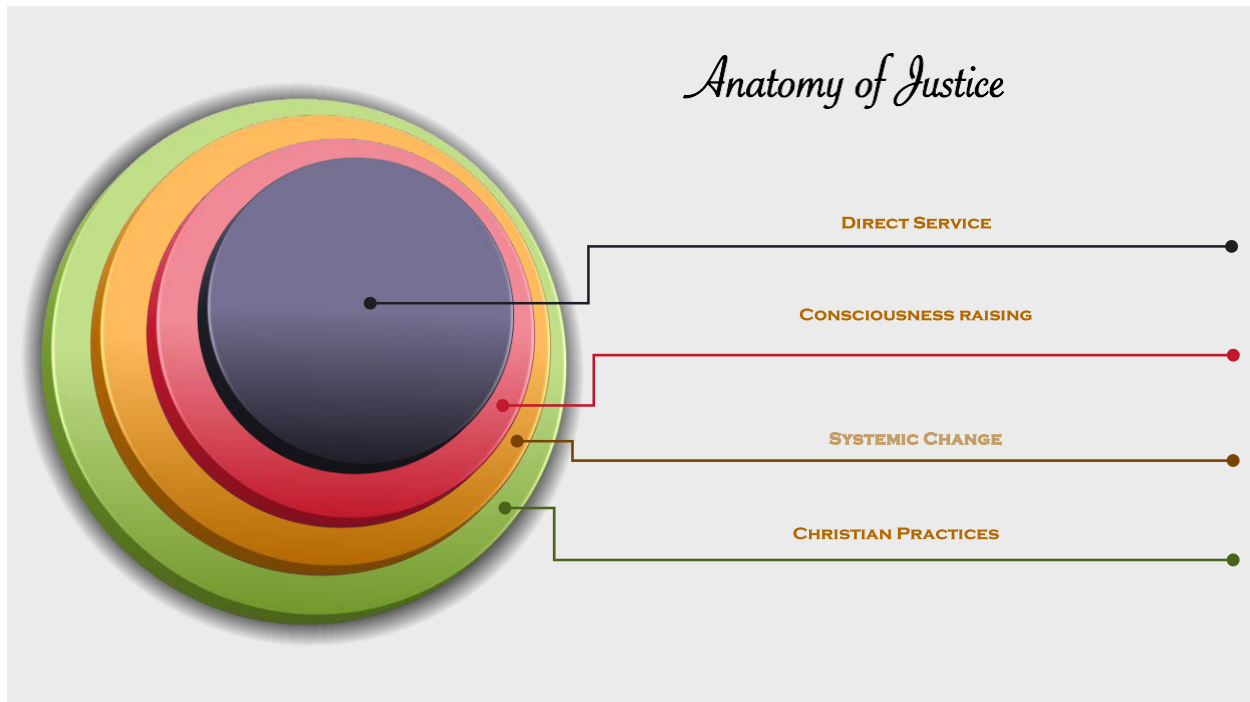
Sending Ritual

As the session comes to an end, move into the sending ritual by using the litany in Appendix D

Leader: God in Heaven, let us show compassion to those who are in need.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
 Leader: Teach us to speak out where there is injustice.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
 Leader: Lead us to work for the empowerment of those who are oppressed.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
 Leader: Give us the courage to work for peace in a world filled with war and violence.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
 Leader: Help us to offer hope in the face of suffering and despair.
People: Lord, we ask for the strength to be your tireless servants for love and freedom in the world.
All: We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, the source of our hope, the manifestation of your grace. Amen

A few passages for further consideration

- Genesis 1:26-27
- Genesis 18:19
- Exodus 6:2-8
- Leviticus 19:13-18
- Numbers 26:33-27:7
- Deuteronomy 6:4-15a
- Deuteronomy 10:17-19
- Deuteronomy 15:7-11
- Deuteronomy 16:20
- Deuteronomy 24:14-22
- Psalm 146
- Isaiah 1:12-16
- Isaiah 61:1-3
- Jeremiah 9:23-24
- Hosea 12:5-7
- Amos 5:10-14 & 21-24
- **Micah 6:8**
 - ⁶“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ⁷Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?” ⁸He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
- Matthew 25:31-46
- Mark 12:28-34
- Luke 4:14-21
- Luke 18:1-8
- John 10:10
- John 13:34-35
- 1 John 3:16-18
- 1 John 4:4-12 & 18-21



DIRECTED SERVICE – meets the immediate, concrete needs – hunger, shelter, safety. It serves the least number of people but “stops the bleeding.” (e.g., soup kitchens, homeless shelters, Habitat for Humanity, clothing closets, food pantries...)

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING – asks the “why” question so that we can understand the root causes of injustice. This is the “gateway” – the bridge of education – which opens to deeper, faithful engagement. It broadens the circle of influence and moves people from service to advocacy. (e.g., listening to the stories of those directly impacted by poverty and injustice, reading memoirs, watching documentaries, attending panel presentations and discussions, engaging in dialogue with those whose experiences are different than yours, following the statistics to the personal...)

SYSTEMIC CHANGE – eradicate those root causes and perpetuate injustice. It widens the circle so the greatest number of people benefit from an equitable and just society. (e.g., sponsoring and tracking legislation, holding congressional leaders accountable for their voting record, participating in public witnesses...)

CHRISTIAN PRACTICES - are the rituals and spiritual disciplines that connect us with God, remind us of God’s mission and renews us and sustains the work of justice for people of faith. (e.g., worship, prayer, bible study...)

**SDOP Funded Projects
Northeast Region**

National

Black Women's Blueprint, Bronx, New York The project seeks to bring to the forefront the injustices that African-American women receive from the police and how to deal with their actions when confronted with such injustices.

E.P.O.C.A. (Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement), Worcester, Massachusetts This group provides leadership and organizing training for formerly incarcerated people. The training provides participants with skills and resources that enable them to build capacity through community networks and by connecting those formerly incarcerated to greater employment opportunities. Group members also partner with other community organizations in organizing campaigns to make major legislative policy changes at the state and local level regarding formerly incarcerated people. E.P.O.C.A. recognizes that those who are formerly incarcerated struggle with intersectional issues such as homelessness, the need for driver's licenses, navigating the criminal justice system and exploring models of restorative justice, so the group pays special attention to these issues.

Local

Building Relationships in Developing Generational Entrepreneurs (B.R.I.D.G.E.S.), Turtle Creek, Pennsylvania, received a \$3,600 grant for its project. The intergenerational group of students and families seeks to connect its project members and community residents to schools, events and organizations through technology in this Covid era when communication is primarily virtual/digital.

An Example of an International Project is...

Group of Women of Value, S.A., Panama City, Panama This project is a catering service that provides high-quality products at affordable prices. The project also provides employment and training to group members, thus helping to provide an income and improve their standard of living. Additional funds were awarded to this group of women to buy a Food truck to allow them to continue their services in times of COVID-19

SDOP Funded Projects South Region

National

VOTE (Voice of the Ex-Offender), New Orleans, Louisiana This is a well-organized group of ex-offenders, some of whom are living in a transition home and working together to improve their lives and support their families. They received training in entrepreneurship and marketing and have come together to create a co-op. The project provides the men with a means of making a sustainable income.

The Geiger Live Well Faith Community, Emelle, Alabama The overall goal of this project is to increase the number of families who are engaging in healthy dietary behaviors and improved physical activity efforts to reduce incidences of child and adult obesity. The goals include: (1) Health — Teaching community members how to eat healthy food, working in the garden and orchard with community members and developing an office and operations building. (2) Wellness — Providing easy access to wellness equipment and the walking facility for residents of Geiger and neighboring towns as well as outdoor exercise equipment, slides and a basketball court for students.

Local

Mindat Community Gardens, Louisville, KY, received a \$4,390 grant for a community gardening project. Project members plan to grow a variety of vegetables for their consumption to supplement what they can afford to buy.

An Example of an International Project is...

Boricuá Organization for Agroecology of Puerto Rico (Joint OGHS Project) Project focuses on strengthening food security. Through educational and training activities members will enhance their ability to know how to reduce hunger, poverty and to produce sustainable and healthy food for themselves & for their community.

SDOP Funded Projects Midwest Region

National

Tenant Coalition Training of Fargo-Moorhead Area, Moorhead, Minnesota This group of low-income refugees seeks to become economically self-sufficient and to improve their financial skills. They receive training in facilities management, business plans, tenants' rights and microenterprise. Long-term goals are aimed at sustaining their financial security, workforce development and cultural marketing by preventing conditions that perpetuate joblessness, homelessness and poverty. The project helps reduce poverty among the group members and their dependency on public assistance and make the transition of living in a new country less frightening and somewhat easier for them as new refugees.

We the People of Detroit, Detroit, Michigan This is an advocacy project to provide short-term water supplies for members to avert a public health crisis, restore water to affected and high-risk members and implement policy to ensure that fresh, clean water is delivered to low income residents at an affordable cost.

Local

Tenant Coalition Training of Fargo-Moorhead Area, Moorhead, Minnesota This group of low-income refugees seeks to become economically self-sufficient and to improve their financial skills. They receive training in facilities management, business plans, tenants' rights and microenterprise. Long-term goals are aimed at sustaining their financial security, workforce development and cultural marketing by preventing conditions that perpetuate joblessness, homelessness and poverty. The project helps reduce poverty among the group members and their dependency on public assistance and make the transition of living in a new country less frightening and somewhat easier for them as new refugees.

An Example of an International Project is...

Presbyterian Church of Rwanda Project, Rwanda An intermediary partnership supporting agriculture, handicrafts, saving and loan associations, income-generating activities, water supply and electricity projects. The beneficiaries of these projects are from the poorest and most undeveloped regions in Rwanda.

SDOP Funded Projects West Region

National

Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network, Albuquerque, New Mexico The mission of La Cosecha, a project of the Agri-Cultura Cooperative Network, is to ensure that low-income families have adequate and sustainable access to healthy and affordable locally grown food and nutrition education, strengthening the local economy by providing a stable market for local farmers and connecting them with families struggling with hunger and poor nutrition.

Local

A Brighter Day Youth Program, Belmont, California The Brighter Day Anti-Vaping Youth Team was organized recently and was drawn from the larger “Brighter Day” program. The project’s focus is supporting youth and providing opportunities to overcome the problematic circumstances of their young lives. The teens themselves have identified vaping as a major problem in their own communities, which adds yet another barrier to becoming productive citizens and adults and may cause lifelong health problems and early death.

The Genesis Youth Organizing Internship Project, Oakland, California This project is comprised primarily of low-income minority youth seeking to disrupt School-to-Prison-Pipeline-related problems in Oakland. The project creates a platform for youth to engage in the public arena, and particularly in juvenile incarceration policy development. The Genesis Youth Organizing Internship Project will train low-income youth, many affected by suspension, expulsion and/or incarceration, in leadership skills and expose them to opportunities to develop and influence local county criminal justice budgets, programs and policies.

An Example of an International Project is...

Sandy Beach, Stann Creek District, Belize This project consists of a group of women trying to restore a restaurant and re-employ themselves. They have added cabanas to complete a bed and breakfast service, and expanded, remodeled, and equipped the restaurant kitchen. The project increases the group’s capacity to successfully operate the cooperative within the developing tourism industry.

Closing Litany

Leader: God in Heaven, let us show compassion to those who are in need.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
Leader: Teach us to speak out where there is injustice.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
Leader: Lead us to work for the empowerment of those who are oppressed.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
Leader: Give us the courage to work for peace in a world filled with war and violence.
People: Show us the way, Lord.
Leader: Help us to offer hope in the face of suffering and despair.
People: Lord, we ask for the strength to be your tireless servants for love and freedom in the world.
All: We ask it in the name of Jesus Christ, the source of our hope, the manifestation of your grace. Amen

