

# Worship Resources



These resources will help you lead your congregation in a celebration of Thanksgiving.

This Thanksgiving we are celebrating God's gift of family. Hundreds of families across Canada are reaching out to men, women, and children in villages and cities around the world who are struggling to survive. These families belong to a group of people who are helping to Free Families from hunger and poverty by helping them help themselves.

Free a Family® brings hope to individual families by equipping them with the tools and training to start a small business, save money through a Village Loan and Savings program, learn new farming techniques to deal with changing weather patterns, and so much more. From health care to practical agricultural support to spiritual encouragement, families are learning to support themselves! To learn more about the Free a Family® program, please visit [worldrenew.ca/freefamily](http://worldrenew.ca/freefamily).

## A Story of Thanksgiving

The challenges of the pandemic have taken a toll on families living in poverty.

COVID has closed schools and overloaded fragile healthcare systems. Merlyn Zuelma Zambrano and her family are safe in Honduras, but they are struggling. They want you to know they are grateful that Canadian families are walking alongside them throughout this difficult path.

Estefany and Erlin, Merlyn's children, miss their friends. They are doing some school work at home, but the family does not own a computer. It's tough to do their school work on the small screen of a cellphone.

Merlyn is grateful that her neighbours continue to buy her tortillas. During the pandemic the cost of corn has gone up and families have less income to spend. Their business is down, but they are surviving. Merlyn says, "I am grateful to God that people are still buying my tortillas and that my family is getting by."

Through Free a Family® programs, Merlyn and her family have received critical pandemic resources: masks, antibacterial gel and liquid soap. Her family has also been learning more about the best safety protocols during these dangerous times.

Merlyn is also participating in a sustainable agricultural program. It's a great opportunity to supplement her income and to put nutritious food on her family's table. And, most importantly, Merlyn and her family are able to look to the future with hope, even in the midst of trying times.

*Every family is unique.*

*Our team is on the ground, partnering with the church community, understanding the specific needs of families.*

*Education, improved health, sustainable agriculture, small businesses, and spiritual guidance all contribute to healthier families.*



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## Focus on God's Word:

"He caused the storm to be still,  
So that the waves of the sea were hushed.  
Then they were glad because they were quiet;  
So he guided them to their desired haven.  
Let them give thanks to the LORD for his loving kindness,  
And for his wonders to the sons of men!  
Let them extol him also in the congregation of the people,  
And praise him at the seat of the elders."  
Psalm 107:29-32

## Litany Of Thanksgiving (based on Psalm 136 and the Beatitudes)

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.  
**His love endures forever.**

Give thanks to our God, who is our creator.  
**His love endures forever.**

The stars, the sun and the planets obey his commands.  
He lights the earth by day,  
He gives us rest at night.  
**His love endures forever.**

He walks with us, through our joy and through our struggle.  
He protects us and keeps us from danger,  
He walks with us in the wilderness  
And in the meadow.  
**His love endures forever.**

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He provides our food, our homes, our family,  
He created one body, unified in doing good.  
He blesses those who are filled with sorrow and deep remorse.  
He walks with us as we mourn the loss of those we love.

**His love endures forever.**

He rewards the gentle, the righteous,  
And gives mercy to those who are merciful.  
He honours the pure of heart and the peacemakers.

**His love endures forever.**

Those who are persecuted for his name have confidence in his rewards.  
Those who are ridiculed for doing good are embraced by his love.  
Those who stand for peace and justice represent his law.

Give thanks to the God of heaven.

**His love endures forever.**

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

Our Father in heaven,  
We are grateful for your kindness to us.  
When we suffer, you walk with us.  
When we lose our way, you lead us until we find our way again.  
When we celebrate, you rejoice with us.  
When we seek truth, you help us find it.

Today, help us to remember the blessings you have given us.  
Help us see where discipline has made us stronger,  
And love has made us gentler.  
We thank you, for you are just.  
We thank you, for you orchestrate peace.  
We thank you, because you lay a firm foundation.

Because you are a God of love,  
We rest in you, resisting anxiety by leaning on you.  
We are rooted in you.  
We are strong in faith and overflow in thanks.  
Amen





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## Children's Message/Sermon

I want to tell you a story about a little girl named Tiwonge.

You might think Tiwonge is an unusual name—but it's the most popular girl's name in Zambia. Like Ava or Emma; Olivia or Sophia in Canada.

Tiwonge means "Let's give thanks!"

Isn't that a great name!

But there are some days that Tiwonge doesn't feel like being thankful. Do you ever feel that way?

Some days, Tiwonge thinks, the hot sun chases every cloud from the sky. You see, it can be very hot where Tiwonge lives. So hot it seems like the sun burns every green leaf! Right now, when you are pulling out your mitts and boots, Tiwonge is heading into summer! But even the winter isn't cold. She has never, ever seen snow. She can't even imagine what it feels like to build a snow man or toboggan down a snowy hill.

But this year, Tiwonge has something to be very thankful for. This year, her mom and dad are able to buy soybean seeds for a very low price—because of gifts from families like yours. Now, who here has ever seen a soybean?

Soybeans are very important where Tiwonge lives. Her family can grind the beans up and use it like flour to make bread or baked goods. You can also use soybean for oil. It's very valuable at the market. When her parents sell their soybean crop, they have money to buy food, school supplies, medicine, and other essentials.

Tiwonge's parents put the soybean seeds into the ground. Tiwonge helps by playing with her younger brother and sister while her parents work in the fields.

Then they pray that the sun would warm the soil, causing the seed to grow. They also pray for rain to water the soil.

And when they harvest their crop, the whole family celebrates! Just like we're celebrating today.

### Can we think of some ways God helped Tiwonge and her family?

- He brings the sun to warm the soil
- He sends the rain to water the crop
- He protects Tiwonge and her family from sickness, so they can plant and harvest the crop

### What are some things you can be thankful for today?