

## Gospel Responsive Reading: Caring for Those in Need

Matthew 25:35-40 (NRSV)

**Leader:** For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.

**People:** Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink?"

**Women:** And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing?

**Men:** And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?

**Leader:** And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."

## A Litany for Blanket Sunday

**Leader:** A mother covered her children with a blanket to shield them from the cold.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket shelter families from the cold and help to keep them warm here in the United States.

**Leader:** A volunteer distributed blankets to the homeless living on the streets.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket provide shelter to people without homes around the world.

**Leader:** After the flood, God sent a rainbow of hope and promises.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket give hope and promise to victims of floods, hurricanes and earthquakes.

**Leader:** The Good Samaritan took the beaten man to a safe place, so he could receive care.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket provide warmth to our brothers and sisters who are seeking a safe place to stay.

**Leader:** Ruth arrived in Bethlehem, a refugee with nothing.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket provide shelter for displaced people around the world.

**Leader:** After Jesus had risen, he returned to his followers, instructing them to care for his sheep.

**People:** May my gift of a blanket give warmth and shelter, comfort and privacy and healing and hope wherever God's people may need care.

**Leader:** In Jesus' name, we offer these gifts. Amen.



# CWS BLANKETS: Leader's guide



You're reading this guide because where there is need, you see opportunities for compassionate response. You envision a world in which people love and care for each other, and you know the members of your congregation are generous, and they want to help others.

And we are so very grateful for your efforts.

That's why, in this guide, you'll find information and congregational resources to help you do what leaders do. Share your vision. Inspire others. And motivate those in your congregation and your sphere of influence to aid and empower people struggling through times of crisis or adversity.

*"They are also filled with  
**abundant joy,**  
which has overflowed in  
**rich generosity."***

— 2 Corinthians 8:2





## How does your congregation's support change lives?



Without your congregation's Blankets Sunday, Church World Service would not be able to offer these blankets to others. When disasters strike, when temperatures drop, when sidewalks become home...you make sure someone is there offering warmth.

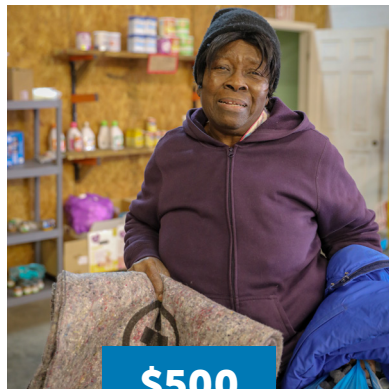
### Imagine the possibilities...

Each blanket is only \$10, but the difference your congregation can make by providing blankets is inspiring.



**\$250**

Provides lightweight blankets for five families left homeless by a tornado



**\$500**

Provides warm blankets for a small women's shelter



**\$750**

Provides 75 blankets for a homeless street ministry



**\$1,200**

Provides blankets for an organization doing neighborhood outreach



**\$2,000**

Provides blankets for the beds in a temporary shelter following a hurricane

## Helpful Hints for Hosting a Successful Blankets Sunday

### USE RESOURCES

Share your passion of serving others with your congregation. They will give generously when they hear about the need and how they can make a difference. Make your CWS Blankets Sunday special by downloading Moment for Missions, videos, prayers, Children's Sermons and blessings at [cwsblankets.org](http://cwsblankets.org).

### SET A GOAL

Set a goal of how many blankets you would like your congregation to provide to people in need. Inform your members that each blanket costs only \$10 and encourage them to provide as many blankets as they can.

### PREPARE A DISPLAY

Create a display to highlight the CWS Blankets program and show the progress towards your goal of raising funds. After your CWS Blankets Sunday, share the amount raised for CWS Blankets in your newsletter and bulletin.

### INVOLVE THE YOUTH

Share the legacy of a CWS Blankets Sunday with the youth and children in your congregation. Ask a member of the youth group to help plan and promote CWS Blankets Sunday.

### UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA

Start publicizing your CWS Blankets Sunday 3-4 weeks in advance. Ask someone at your congregation to place announcements in your newsletter, in your Sunday bulletin and on your Facebook page. Visit [cwsblankets.org/downloads](http://cwsblankets.org/downloads) for Blankets Sunday graphics to make your advertising easy.

### HANG POSTERS

Hang CWS Blankets posters in prominent locations to advertise your Blankets Sunday.

### USE PRAYER CARDS

Staff a table by the door to the sanctuary and place a CWS Blanket, blank prayer cards and pens. Encourage the members of your congregation to write their prayers on a prayer card and include the prayer card with their blanket offering.

### CULTIVATE EMPATHY

If it is cold outside, consider ending your worship service outdoors. Ask your pastor to bless the blankets that your congregation donated at this service.

### VOLUNTEER

Arrange an opportunity for members of your congregation to volunteer at a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter to help remind them of the needs in your own community.

Check out other "Creative Ideas that Work" at resources at [cwsblankets.org](http://cwsblankets.org)