

# UMCOR SUNDAY

## YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE



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## UMCOR SUNDAY YOUTH RESOURCES—LOVE IS...

### Event Ideas for Youth to Celebrate UMCOR Sunday

UMCOR Sunday falls on the Fourth Sunday in Lent, a season of reflection and repentance set aside to explore God's expectations and promises.

Consider designing UMCOR Sunday events through the lens of reflection that leads to missional and systemic action.



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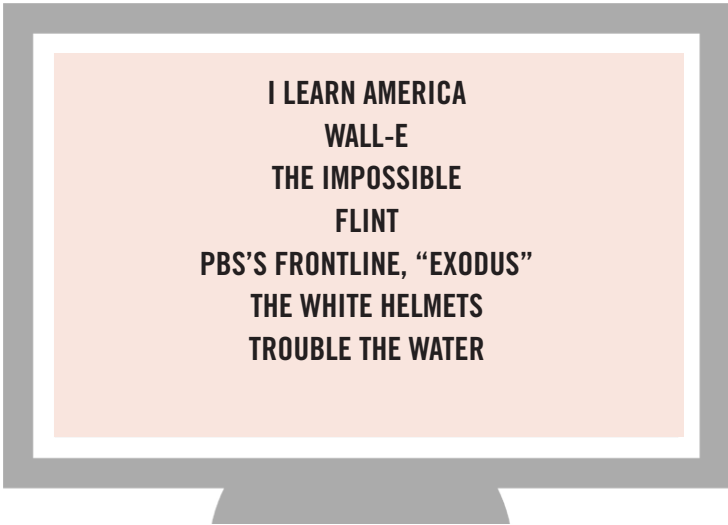
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## VIRTUAL WATCH PARTY

**Host a virtual watch party that explores concerns with which UMCOR is engaged.**  
Invite each youth to develop a conversation starter or question for discussion after the film.

**Some suggested titles:**



I LEARN AMERICA  
WALL-E  
THE IMPOSSIBLE  
FLINT  
PBS'S FRONTLINE, "EXODUS"  
THE WHITE HELMETS  
TROUBLE THE WATER



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### DAY OF SERVICE

#### Organize a day of service.

Encourage the youth to serve in the community. Some ideas include:

- Volunteering at a local food pantry or soup kitchen,
- Contacting community organizations to see how youth might serve,
- Organizing a clean-up day at the park
- Working with refugees in a community garden
- Developing, along with church trustees, a plan for youth to make minor repairs and paint and clean the church in preparation for Easter (or perhaps coordinate a church exchange with another youth group to serve each other's church), or
- Assembling hygiene or other kits for distribution through UMCOR
- <https://umcmmission.org/umcor-hygiene-kit/>



#### Set up an interview.

Who in your conference is a Disaster Response Coordinator or a member of the Emergency Response Team? Invite them to speak with the youth about their experiences!

#### Raise awareness about homelessness.

Talk to a homeless advocate in the community, to learn more about the challenges facing those nearby who are experiencing homelessness.

If public health concerns allow for it, serve a meal at a homeless shelter. Distribute food at a Food Pantry. Collect winter clothing or new underwear and socks to be distributed through local shelters. Write a reflection or report about homelessness for the church newsletter or school or community newspaper. Design signs with statistics and quotes about homelessness for your church lawn.

Coordinate a “sleep out” in solidarity with young people who do not have a home. The youth bring a sleeping bag, piece of cardboard and pillow. The students sleep in an open space perhaps their front lawn or porch or if group gatherings are permitted, consider the church parking lot or public park following local health guidelines (get appropriate permits). Ask youth to find sponsors for each hour they are outside during the weekend. Donate the funds collected to UMCOR. During the weekend, explore the circumstances that lead to local and global homelessness. Discuss the challenges and surprises that the youth experience.



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## WORSHIP PLAYLIST



Lecrae—“Tell the World”

<https://youtu.be/Yc8x33IAAnAk>



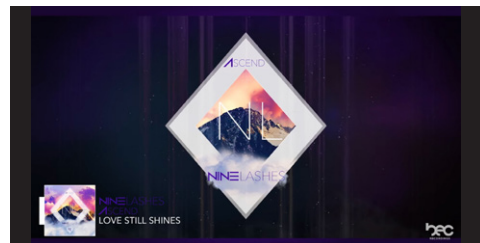
Hillsong Young & Free—“Wake (Live from Summercamp)”

<https://youtu.be/e33zCUm1ZnY>



Chris Tomlin—“I Will Follow”

<https://youtu.be/1ohvhmGSfxI>



Nine Lashes—“Love Still Shines”

[https://youtu.be/TtqCRim7\\_no](https://youtu.be/TtqCRim7_no)



Matt Redman—“We Could Change the World”

[https://youtu.be/MZ2Jhy7\\_W8Y](https://youtu.be/MZ2Jhy7_W8Y)



Abandon—“Live It Out”

<https://youtu.be/dIK-mjijBhI>



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### GROUP OPENING & ICEBREAKER

Welcome the youth as usual. In your welcome, include an introduction to UMCOR Sunday:

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together through our connection than we ever can do on our own. Today we join with other congregations to receive the UMCOR Sunday special offering.



Our gifts contribute to the United Methodist Committee on Relief, an organization that for 80 years has worked to share Christ's love by alleviating human

suffering. Responding to people and communities that are impacted by the effects of war, civil unrest, storms, wildfires, famines or floods, UMCOR steps in on your behalf in times of crisis to help individuals, families and communities too overwhelmed to recover on their own.

Today we are going to play a game similar to Scattergories. Working in teams of four to five people, you will come up with one-

word examples to describe the category written on the card. The goal is to have different words than the other teams. You will receive one point for each unique word. You have two minutes for each category.



Categories:

**Natural Disasters**  
**Cleaning Supplies**  
**Countries**  
**Basic Human Needs**  
**Love**  
**Alleviate Suffering**

Now, listen to the following scripture reading and write down the words you hear that describe "love."



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SCRIPTURE: 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, CEB

## MESSAGE: LOVE NOT FEAR

I mentioned that today is UMCOR Sunday. During the COVID-19 pandemic, UMCOR worked with churches and other organizations to create a network to help reach out to communities all around the world. They did that as an extension of our church and other United Methodist churches. This is a short video that shows some of the work that happened:

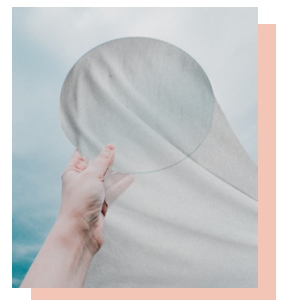
 <https://vimeo.com/444357483>



Over this past year, we have all experienced uncertainty and that understandably leads to fear and anxiety. But so often fear, if we don't examine it, becomes a barrier to full relationship with God. Fear can also be a barrier to reaching out with love when we see our neighbor suffering.

**“[Love] isn't happy with injustice, but it is happy with the truth.”**

*Lift a hand mirror that is covered with a thin piece of cloth.*



Paul writes to the church in Corinth that until we reach a mature faith, we see the fullness of God as if we are looking in a mirror. Depending on where you are in your journey, that reflection of God in your lives can be very dim. And fear is perhaps part of that veil that keeps you separated from experiencing the certainty of God's loving presence in your life.

There is such a tension. We want to know. We want predictability. It is hard to sit with the complexity of not knowing. We feel impatient and anxious thinking about the “what ifs.”



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When it comes to faith, as United Methodists, we live in tension with what we know based on scripture, tradition, experience, reason to be followers of Christ. When we act from this “in-between” place we begin to see signs of God’s beloved community springing up in the most unlikely places.

In the “Sheltering in Love” video, we saw images of love being carried out in communities around the world in uncertain situations. That is the good news of God’s grace. “Love puts up with all things, trusts in all things, hopes for all things, endures all things.” Even and especially in the midst of challenging and uncertain times, it is through extending love to one another that we find joy.

The Holy Spirit is always moving us, nudging us, toward God through Jesus Christ and toward enriching relationships with one another. When we instead put up barriers and walls, literal and spiritual, that keep us from trusting one another to protect ourselves, we also block ourselves off from the full experience God’s love.

“[Love] isn’t rude, it doesn’t seek its own advantage, it isn’t irritable, it doesn’t keep a record of complaints.” When we step out of our comfort zones and allow ourselves to feel anticipation instead of anxiety, trusting in God to lead us, we begin to experience a wholeheartedness that lovingly embraces our neighbor.

This wholeheartedness remembers in this Lenten season that when humans tried to kill Jesus, God’s love overcame even the certainty of Christ’s death on the cross.

Through UMCOR and in other ways that we serve, we are able to live out that wholehearted love in the ways that Paul lists. It’s a kind of love that is not romantic love but what in Greek is called “agape” love.

We don’t share our love in a way that brags or shows off to others. We serve others out of a sense of agape love for our siblings, God’s other children. We serve others to help them know that they are not alone and that Christlike love journeys with them. And we serve others because if one part of the body suffers, we all suffer. When one part heals, we all experience healing.

In centering ourselves in Christ, when our logic or insecurity may try to orient us to worry or be anxious, we find that God is with us. We find grace in God’s solid love for us. And we find it easier to extend that love to others.

The image of God that Paul wrote about to the church in Corinth begins to be more fully known and part of our lives. Worry is replaced with a sense of peace, setting our feet firmly on a path that follows the love and the life of Jesus Christ.



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## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION



**Break into teams for discussion:**

1. Read the scripture passage again.
2. What were the words that you wrote down to describe “love” when we played the category game?
3. What were the words you wrote down when you heard the Bible reading?
4. Is love a feeling or an action? Explain your answer.
5. How does the church express love for other people in our community?
6. How does the church express love for other people outside our community?
7. How will you express agape love for someone this week?
8. What was the good news you heard in the scripture reading today?



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### OFFERING

Today we offer back a portion of what God has given to us. Through our UMCOR Sunday offering, we share agape love with people all around the world who must rebuild their communities after natural or other disasters.

You are invited to give generously, trusting that your gifts will join with those of others in our church and in other churches and be multiplied.

The contribution you offer today will share Christ's love with people who have experienced war, civil unrest, storms, wildfires, famines and floods.



#### TAKE IT INTO THE WORLD

On heart-shaped paper, write down one prayer request for something you are worried about for yourself or in the world. Post it to the board and then take someone else's prayer and commit to lovingly hold the situation in prayer throughout your week.



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