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What Types of Acts of Love Should We Do?

There are many different types of Acts of Love you can do. Sometimes it can be hard to decide what to do next. It is always best to pray and ask God for wisdom. Here are some examples and ideas to think about as well:

Showing Love to Just One Person

Recently we visited some of the churches who were learning TCT in India. We heard many good stories of what God has been doing in their churches and communities. In one community, members of the church collected money to help a young man get a loan for a vehicle. Another church had helped a widow buy a sewing machine, so now she is able to earn an income and not be dependent on others. In these Acts of Love, the benefit is experienced only by a few people.

Sometimes God shows us to do something to help one person—maybe they need a special act to see God’s love. We have seen God do amazing things as a result of helping one person. After one church helped a gang leader, many families saw the change in his life and gave their lives to Christ. (You can read this story in the stories section.)

Showing Love to the Whole Community

While in India we also saw other Acts of Love that benefited a large community outside the church. One church repaired and painted the broken down school building in their community. The headmaster and many members of the community saw the benefit of the project, and it changed their attitude toward the church. (The full story can be found in the stories section).

Another church repaired a leaking water tank. Now the whole community is able to have enough water. In yet another community, the church members and non-Christians worked together to repair a bad road. Now the community can reach the main road much faster.

Projects that help the whole community—things like fixing a road, cleaning a clinic, and repairing a water system—are very good because:

1. They benefit the whole community.
2. They help to change people's thinking. The small initiative taken by the church to serve others helped the community to see that, if they all worked together, they can make their whole village a better place to live.
3. The projects opened their eyes to the resources and potential they already have. So they realized they don't always have to wait for the government to do things.
4. By working together, the church members and Non-Christians build a relationship with one another. People become more caring and less selfish. The church is now beginning to influence a biblical culture in the community.
5. The project uses all the talents in the church. Not everyone is able to give money, but often people have different talents, time, and energy that they can donate. Community projects allow people to contribute in different ways.
6. By depending on God for wisdom, the church is able to solve big community problems by simple Acts of Love. The pastor often becomes a community leader, and the church becomes seen as a friend of the community.

7. People begin to come to the church for help with other problems, and they seek to understand and know the God of love. In this way, the church also grows.
8. When people of the community know that the God of the Christians is able to solve problems, God is glorified.

Go and Do It!

Both community-based Acts of Love and those that help just one or two people are good. Look and see what is needed in your community. Then pray and ask God if there is a way your church can address any of these needs.



Spiritual Growth

Where is Our Focus?

My favorite outing as a child was to go to the night market with my dad. I enjoyed seeing the colorful fruits and vegetables all arranged in neat rows and potatoes of various shapes piled up in heaps. I loved the sweet smell of cut pineapples and the sound of the vendors calling out to customers, "Come and buy! Come and buy! At throw away prices!"

On one occasion, as I walked through the market, I saw a potter. I stopped to watch, amazed at how a lump of ugly clay was so beautifully fashioned by the skilled

potter. My dad kept calling me to come along, but I had to watch. One pot had a round, wide neck. The next had a long neck and small mouth. I heard my dad call again, and I shouted, "I am coming!" But I continued to stand there watching. Finally, I turned to look for my dad, only to realize my father and sisters had walked on. I could not see them anywhere. It seemed impossible to find them amidst the large crowd.

Suddenly, I was seized with terror. I wished I had not stopped by the potter. The fruits and vegetables were no longer beautiful. Nothing could make me feel happy or joyful. When I lost sight of my father, I also lost the ability to enjoy the wonderful things around me.

For some of us, life is just like this. We have taken our focus off of our Father in Heaven, so everything else feels frightening and difficult. Because we are focused on the struggles of daily living, we can no longer recognize the great and wonderful things God is doing in and around us. The beauty of creation no longer delights us. Our children do not bring us joy. We don't notice the pain in our neighbor's eyes. We do not see opportunities to help or serve or love our neighbor. We are unable to see life as we ought, for we have taken our eyes off of our Heavenly Father and are looking only at our trouble and pain.

In Deuteronomy 31:6, the great leader Moses tells the people of God, "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified... for the Lord your God goes with you; He will never leave you nor forsake you." This is true for us! Even though we may take our eyes off of Him, He will never leave us or forsake us. He loves us so much. Humble yourself and repent, asking your Father to forgive you for focusing on anything else besides Him. Offer Him praise, and He will lift you up. He will remove your fear and your heartache; He will restore your joy. As He fills you with His love, you will once again be able to pour out that love onto others.

Health

How to Ensure That Our Children Grow up Strong, Healthy, and Clever

Reena was a young mother with two children, Paul and Rachel. Reena had great dreams for her children. She wanted them to grow up strong, healthy, and clever. However, over the months, she noticed that Paul (4 years) and Rachel (2 years) were falling ill frequently, and they were not as active as they used to be. They both got tired easily, and her little Rachel was irritable all the time. Then Reena noticed that Rachel's abdomen grew larger, while her arms and legs became thinner and thinner. She tried to feed her, but Rachel kept refusing to eat. The little girl's hair was losing its dark color and was falling out rapidly. Her son Paul constantly complained of headaches, and his grades in school were becoming poor. The teacher complained that Paul often fell asleep in class and would not pay attention.

Reena realized that something was not quite right with her children. So she took them to the health center. There she was told that her children were not being given the right kind of food and so they were malnourished.

Reena could not believe it. How could they be malnourished?! Every day she fed them bananas, cassava, and sweet potatoes, which she grew in her garden—enough for the whole family. But lately Rachel had become a fussy eater and not interested in eating. What could she do?



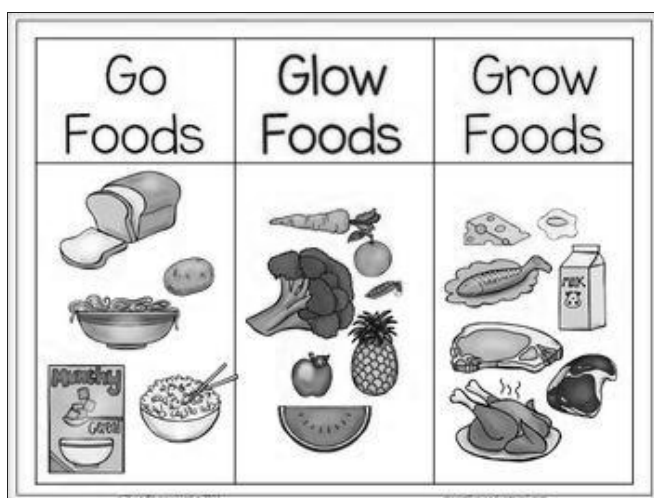
The health worker explained that nutrition is not only about the amount of food you eat but also the quality and variety of food you eat. If a child does not eat the right kinds of food, they are prone to fall ill because their bodies are not able to fight disease.

Reena learned that children need to eat a wide variety of foods for their growth and development. Different kinds of foods support different functions in the body so that children can grow tall, be active and study well, and also be able to fight diseases and stay healthy.

The three important food groups

All foods can be divided into food groups. Each food group has a different function in the body. If all the food groups are not included in our diets, we can develop malnutrition. In the TCT Health lessons, we share four food groups: main foods, and three types of helper foods: high-energy, body-building, and protective foods. Here, we'll share another way to think about the food groups as Go foods, Glow foods, and Grow foods. Whatever names we use, the important thing to remember is that our bodies need lots of different types of food to be healthy.

Let's look at food in three groups: **Go foods**, **Glow foods**, and **Grow foods**.



Go Foods provide energy and help us 'go' and be active. Examples of Go Foods include **bread, rice, cassava, sweet potato, white potato, matoke** (cooked bananas) **and other cereals**. These foods give our muscles fuel to run, swim, jump, and cycle and give our brains fuel to concentrate.

If we don't eat enough Go Foods then we feel tired and don't have enough energy to get through the day. It's important to include Go Foods at all meals and especially breakfast so that our bodies and brains can get ready for the busy day ahead.

Grow Foods help our bodies grow taller and stronger. Our bodies need Grow Foods to build bones, teeth and

muscles. Examples of Grow Foods include **chicken, meat, fish, beans and legumes, nuts, eggs, milk, cheese, yoghurt, and other dairy products**. All of these foods help to keep us feeling full so that we don't get hungry straight away. Grow Foods also help keep our brain bright and focused.

Glow Foods are full of vitamins and minerals to keep us healthy and make our skin, hair, and eyes bright and glowing. Glow Foods keep our immune system strong so that we can fight illness. Examples of Glow Foods include all fruits (like orange, papaya, mango, ripe banana, pineapple, grapes, guava) and all vegetables (like carrots, onions, broccoli, cabbage, pumpkin, avocado, squash, tomatoes and green leafy vegetable). The bright colors of fruits and vegetables come from different vitamins and minerals; to make sure you're getting enough Glow Foods, eat fruits and vegetables in many different colors.

How to Best Feed Children

For the first 6 months, babies must be fed only breast milk. Breast milk is the perfect food that God created for our babies, with all the nutrients they need. It is also pure and clean, so the child will not fall ill. For the first 6 months, the child does not need any other food besides mother's milk. After 6 months—while still receiving breast milk—a child should be gradually introduced to easily digestible foods like gruels, mashed sweet bananas, and pureed fruits. By the time a child is about one year old, she is able to eat all the family foods. Now it is important that her diet contains food from the Go, Grow, and Glow food groups for every meals. Children should each be given their own separate plates, so you can see how much food has been eaten by each child.

A healthy child will eat well, and be active and happy. If your child is constantly irritable and crying, tired, or refusing to eat, something could be wrong. You should take him to the health center. Like Reena, we all want our children to grow up to be strong, healthy, and clever. The food we feed our children plays a big role in fulfilling this dream of every parent.

Agriculture



How to Make Fertilizer

How much money do you spend on fertilizer? Does your crop seem to need more fertilizer every year? Spending more and more money each year on fertilizer is a very common problem, because chemical fertilizers strip the natural nutrients out of the soil. But it is possible to make your own fertilizer from things you already have—it saves money and nourishes the soil as God intended! Try it for yourself:

You will need:

- 20 kg of animal manure from small animals like goats, pigs, chickens, or rabbits (not cow or horse manure).
- 20 kg of maize or rice husks
- 10 kg of ash
- 5 kg of chemical fertilizer (either CAN or urea, depending on what kind of soil you have. CAN is good for acid soil, otherwise use urea.)
- 5 liters of urine (human or animal urine work well).

You will also need a plastic bag, a sack, and a clean floor.

Procedure:

1. Spread the animal manure on the floor and add the maize husks. Mix them well.
2. Add the ash, and mix well. It's important that all components are well mixed.
3. Add the chemical fertilizer. Mix everything very well again.
4. Add the urine. Mix well.
5. Put the mixture in a plastic bag. Put the plastic bag in the sack. Tie it tightly so that no air can get in or out.
6. Keep it in a shed for 21 days. After 21 days, open the sack. (*Caution: when opening, do not look into the sack. The fumes that come out are very strong.*)
7. Dry the fertilizer under a shed for 2 hours. Now it is ready to be used, or can be stored in the sack until it is needed.

To use the fertilizer:

This fertilizer can be applied in exactly the same way as chemical fertilizer. You can use whatever method you are used to. One common method is to make two 3-cm deep holes—one on each side of your planting—about 7 cm (one finger-length) away from the plant. Fill each hole with about a teaspoon (or bottle cap) of fertilizer, so that each plant receives two teaspoons of fertilizer.

Acts of Love Stories

Repairing the Water Tank (India, South Asia)

There are four water tanks that provide water for a whole village. One of the tanks had a leak, which resulted in much loss of water. Though more and more water was going to waste, no one in the community seemed to care about it. Even the ward member who is supposed to oversee the development of the community did not do anything. Finally, the leak became so bad that the government stopped filling the

tank instead of repairing it. So the community suffered from an insufficient water supply. After beginning to study TCT and learning about Acts of Love, the church in this village decided this was something they could address. The church members contributed money to pay a technician to repair the leak in the tank. With just \$10 US the tank was repaired. The whole community has benefited, so they appreciated this Act of Love and have begun to view the church as a friend to the community.



had to sell all their assets to pay for these medical treatments. But still she was not able to get the help she needed, and her family feared she would die. When the church saw her situation, they all contributed enough money to send her to the hospital in Mulago, where she received a diagnosis and the medication she needed. Because of the financial support and prayers of the church, Dinah and her family have seen God's love and power. Now He has restored their hope.

Making Safe Passage (DRC, Central Africa)

In the neighborhood of Mpozo in Democratic Republic of Congo, there was a dangerous ravine. Several people had fallen and broken bones trying to cross it. Even so, no one showed concern to solve the problem. But after studying TCT, Repentance Church decided to put what they were learning into practice and show love to their neighbors by building steps and a small bridge across the ravine. They collected bags of cement, shovels, and wheelbarrows for the project. Brothers in the church who were bricklayers and masons completed the work. Now people can safely cross the ravine, and all those who pass by thank the Lord for what the church did.

Building Public Showers (DRC, Central Africa)

In the village of Mvuadu, none of the houses have showers or toilets, so most people bathe in the river and relieve themselves in the open. The older people and women had to go very early in the morning or late at night if they hoped to not be seen, but even so there was not much privacy. This situation continued because the ground is all rock in this area, so it is very difficult and expensive to dig latrines or wells. However, after studying TCT, Ephphtha Charismatic Church in Mvuadu decided to show love to their community by building a public shower. The church members contributed corrugated sheets and boards and collected money to buy two bags of cement. Some of the brothers of the church were carpenters and masons; they worked to build the showers. Now the church's neighbors are praising God for the 10 shower stalls, which they are able to use.



Providing Medical Care for a Sick Woman (Uganda, East Africa)

Near Lira Town in Uganda, a woman named Dinah was sick and in terrible pain. She had gone to the nearby clinic and larger town hospital many times; the family

Churches Learn to do Acts of Love (Malawi, Southeastern Africa)

One of the leaders of Holy Spirit Church was amazed by the content of the first two modules. He realized, “We were lacking the love that we are called to show.” He spoke to his congregation about engaging in Acts of Love. He also went around teaching other churches about Acts of Love. Many of the Christians that they were working with were newly born again, and it proved a challenge encouraging them to grow. However, one of leaders of the churches started collecting clothing and other necessities that he gave to the elderly. Seeing the love in the church, a lot of elderly people started to attend.

One of the churches did not have a very good relationship with the local hospital. Through the teachings of TCT, the church engaged in Acts of Love by digging a waste pit for the hospital. They also started cutting the grass around the hospital, because of the complaints concerning mice entering patient rooms. Now the short grass keeps the mice away.

A member of another of the churches noticed the young children in the church and community did not have anything to do as some of them did not go to school. The church started a Sunday school and invited a lot of children, even children whose families did not

attend the church. They also have Saturday meeting where the children simply enjoy themselves.

An Act of Love Toward an Elderly Widow (Uganda, East Africa)

After studying Module 1, a church in Adyang community in Uganda saw an opportunity to show love to a 79-year-old widow in their village. They gathered one day to weed her garden, plant beans, harvest sweet potatoes, and renovate her home. They also collected some money as a gift to her. The church had the opportunity to share God’s word with the widow and all the neighbors who came to see what was going on.

Showing Love to a Gang Leader (Southeast Asia)

One community we work in had a violent gang member known for abuse and drunkenness. The people living in the community were afraid of him, as he was known to have violent outbursts at anyone who upset him in any way—big or small. As the church prayed about who to help, they felt God put this man on their hearts. Initially, they were scared. What would happen? Would he be upset they helped and attack them? However, they wanted to obey God so they looked for a way to help. With harvest just around the corner, the



church decided to serve the family by helping harvest their crop of tapioca. While the husband was out of town, the church leaders helped his wife harvest, dry, and carry the tapioca to a secure place near her home. Twenty-two people volunteered for three days, and, along with the wife, were able to finish harvesting and packing all the crops before her husband returned.

When the man returned home, he was very surprised to see all the tapioca harvested and he asked his wife who helped her and the children. Initially, his wife was nervous to tell him. She feared he would attack the church leaders. However, after some time, she confessed that it had been people from the church. He immediately marched off to the pastor's house. The pastor quickly gathered the deacons fearing the worst. The drunk gang member came in and started weeping, surprising everyone. "What's wrong," they asked. "I have never known love," the man replied. "I am a top gang leader, but now I want to be a Christian. I want to know the God who loves."

The church leaders assured him that he, too, could become a Christian, but he would have to give up alcohol and his lead position in the gang. He asked for time to think and consulted with his friends in the gang, who all tried to persuade him not to become a Christian. But in the end, the power of God's love won through and he gave his life to Christ. He then became a powerful evangelist amongst the gang leaders and members. In just a few short weeks, God used this man and his testimony to reach 27 new people for Christ. By the grace of God, and the faithful obedience of one church, a life that was once lost had been found, renewed and restored.

A Church Grows as it Serves its Community (India, South Asia)

A one-kilometer dirt road connect one village to the main road. During the rainy season this road becomes muddy, deeply rutted, uneven, and impassible. So to get to the main road, the villagers had to travel three kilometers out of their way. The village asked the government several times to repair the road for them, but the officials turned a deaf ear to their request.

The church prayed about this problem and decided to fill the road with sand from the nearby lake. The church members contributed 5000 rupees to hire a tractor. Then they worked together to fill 10 tractor-loads of sand to build up the dirt road and fill the ruts. When the community member saw what the church was doing, they too joined in. Working together, it took them three days to make a proper road that they all could use. Member of the community appreciated the initiative of the church and three families joined the church.

Doing Acts of Love has now become a regular activity of this church. Many of the members of this community brew their own home made liquor, and both husband and wife get drunk. As a result, many of their children were neglected and malnourished. The church noticed the desperate situation of the children and started a nutrition and tutoring program for them. For one year, 45 children were regularly fed with egg or a small meal. The school teachers reported that these children were doing well in school. Seeing the work of the church, some community members also started contributing provisions for the feeding program. Touched by the love shown to their children, 10 families left their drinking habit.

Over the past two years, the church has grown from 15 members to 40. Praise God for revealing His love through His church, and for drawing people to salvation.

