HOPE FOR HAITIANS

School Lenten Appeal: A Chance to Make a Meaningful Impact

This Lent, have your students make a real difference. Since 2001, Hope for Haitians a charity founded by Catholics in the Rockford Diocese has been dedicated to providing secure homes, safe water, healthcare, and education to Haitian families living in extreme poverty. We invite you and your students to join us in our Lenten Appeal.

Through this annual program, schools help fund projects that improve lives in some of Haiti's most underserved communities. Participating in the Lenten Appeal not only strengthens students' spiritual growth but also teaches them the importance of using their resources to serve others and make a global impact.

Some Challenges of Life in Haiti

- Haiti is a country with over 11 million people.
- It is the poorest country in the western hemisphere, while the US is the most prosperous.
- The average Haitian lives on less than $2.15 per day (extreme poverty).
- One in eighteen children die before the age of five, often because of malnutrition or disentary.
- The average 25-year-old Haitian has less than 5 years of education.
- The unemployment rate in Haiti is around 15%.
- 39% of the adult population is illiterate.
- Over 50% of Haiti's population is school age.
- More than one quarter million primary school aged children have no access to education because of displacement due to violence or the cost of school.
- The cost of school can be as little as $150 per year.
- Many families struggle to afford education for all their children and often need to choose which child can attend school and which cannot.
- 75 percent of children at the end of first grade and nearly half of students finishing second grade cannot read a single word. 30% of students pass the national high school exam.
- Only 1% of Haitians continue to pursue higher education.

Your Students Can Make a Difference

Collecting funds using Lent boxes and calendars is a favorite way for many schools to connect their students desire to help with a daily opportunity to become more aware of the blessings in their own life, and develop a heart of gratitude.

Campaign Ideas and Focus Areas on the other side of this flyer provide specific ways your students can change the lives of children and families in Haiti.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

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How Students Can Help

Each year, parishes and schools across the diocese partner with Hope for Haitians to engage students in meaningful acts of service during Lent. By setting clear goals and age appropriate challenges such as a fundraising target or a friendly competition between classrooms, students stay motivated and can see how their efforts lead to real results. Together, we help students grow in service, compassion, and global responsibility while making a lasting difference for families in Haiti.

Campaign Ideas and Focus Areas:

Buy a Brick or Raise the Roof
Many Haitian families live in unsafe, makeshift shelters. Through a Buy a Brick or Raise the Roof campaign, students work together to help fund the construction of safe, secure homes. Every contribution brings a family closer to a place of stability and dignity. *(It takes 1,169 bricks to make a house at around $6/brick. A roof is about $1,200)*

Solar Lighting for Homes
Reliable electricity is often unavailable in rural Haitian communities. Student donations can help provide solar powered lighting, offering safe, sustainable light for homes and community spaces and improving daily life after sunset. *(solar kits for homes are $200)*

Healthcare Access
Students can support access to basic medical care by helping fund community clinics and mobile medical visits. These efforts ensure families in remote areas receive essential healthcare services they might otherwise go without. *($900 provides a mobil clinic for an entire community)*

Access to Education
Supporting education in Haiti helps children stay in school and build a foundation for the future. Student involvement helps cover tuition assistance and school resources, giving children the opportunity to learn, grow, and break the cycle of poverty. *($150 provides education for a child)*

Get Creative & Make It Meaningful
We invite schools to choose a project that resonates most with their students or create their own initiative. Whether through a fundraising drive, awareness campaign, or classroom contest, these efforts engage students in a meaningful way and allow them to see the direct impact of their generosity. You can also contact us to discus creating a custom campaign theme for your school.

Materials and Offerings for Schools

Coin Boxes
Two approaches are commonly used:

1. Classroom Coin Box or Jar:
   A shared box or jar is placed in each classroom to collect student donations throughout Lent. Classes may set a collective goal, such as filling the box or reaching a target amount, sometimes paired with a simple incentive to encourage participation.

2. Individual Coin Boxes for Home Use:
   Students take individual coin boxes home to use with their families during Lent. When paired with the Lenten Calendar, this approach encourages students to count their blessings, perform acts of service, and cultivate a heart of gratitude while supporting others through almsgiving.

Lenten Calendar
The Lenten Calendar provides a simple, age-appropriate action for each day of Lent. Activities range from helping with household chores to counting pillows in the home and donating a small amount for each one. Designed to cultivate a heart of gratitude, the calendar helps students recognize their blessings, practice acts of service, and offer alms to support those without the same opportunities.

Student Assemblies
Schools may arrange a speaker from Hope for Haitians for a dynamic assembly presentation focused on Haiti, the realities of living in extreme poverty, and the ways people of all ages can make a meaningful difference. Presentations emphasize the Gospel call to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and invite students to respond through prayer, service, and generosity.

Classroom Presentations
Some schools choose to have a speaker present the program at the classroom level, typically by grade during religion periods. This format allows for more focused discussion, age-appropriate engagement, and opportunities for students to ask questions and reflect more deeply.