And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.

Matthew 10:42
Water is the stuff of life: we use it to drink, cook, grow food, stay clean, keep pets and animals, wash clothes and plates, and to worship, play and do sport...

Yet over 884 million people have no clean drinking water and 2.6 billion lack safe sanitation. Some of the poorest people spend up to eight hours a day collecting water, leaving little time for school, work or play. And much of the water collected is dirty, posing a big health risk.

As Christians, our faith compels us to take action alongside our brothers and sisters living in poverty. That’s why we’re calling on our Prime Minister David Cameron to take the lead at the G8 – a meeting of the world’s most powerful nations – in May 2012, to ensure clean water and safe sanitation for everyone.

Water and the MDGs

One of the targets within the Millennium Development Goals commits world leaders to halving the number of people who have no access to clean drinking water and safe sanitation by 2015. Some parts of the world have seen a great improvement on this, but others sadly have not.

Time is running out to meet the goal. If politicians don’t act now, by the time David Cameron becomes G8 President in 2013, another 1.4 million children will have died from poor water and sanitation. We want David Cameron to ensure that the G8 takes real steps to turn the tide on water poverty. This means world leaders must put their money where their mouth is – providing the finance, expertise and political pressure to make sure the MDG target is met.

What are the MDGs?
The Millennium Development Goals are eight internationally agreed goals that aim to halve world poverty by 2015. For more on the MDGs, visit cafod.org.uk/secondary/factsheets.

Who are the G8?
The G8 is a group of the world’s richest and most powerful countries. It comes together to discuss matters of global concern, including international development issues.

Help turn the tide on water poverty

This resource encourages us to think about the value of having water on tap, and what life is like for young people who aren’t so fortunate. We hope this inspires them to join our call: clean water and safe sanitation for all.

The session overleaf prepares your group to ‘make waves’ and take action to support our Thirst for change campaign. You can choose to run every activity over a number of weeks, or pick and choose between them. You can also download an accompanying PowerPoint from cafod.org.uk/thirst to help you along the way.

The change starts here. So let’s dive in....
Quick quiz (5 mins)

**Aim:** to think about our water use and how a lack of clean water affects people around the world.

Run this quick icebreaker activity as a team competition, or ask young people to say what they think the correct answer is. **Answers are in bold.**

1. How many litres of water does a person in Europe use each day for drinking, cooking and washing, on average?
   - A. 100
   - B. 200
   - C. 500 (200 litres is more than a bath filled to its brim)

2. How many litres of water does a person in one of the world’s poorest countries use each day for drinking, cooking and washing, on average?
   - A. 10
   - B. 50
   - C. 100

3. How much water is needed to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool?
   - A. 300,000 litres
   - B. 2.5 million litres
   - C. 10 million litres

4. Approximately how many people in the world do not have clean water to drink?
   - A. 9 million
   - B. 90 million
   - C. 900 million (14 times the population of the UK)

5. Approximately how many children die each year from diarrhoea caused by unclean water and poor sanitation?
   - A. 1 million
   - B. 1.2 million
   - C. 1.4 million (equivalent to the population of Birmingham and Liverpool combined)

On tap (10 mins)

**Aim:** to think about how we rely on water being ‘on tap’ and find out how two young people in Zambia get their water.

**You’ll need:** Angel and Rosena’s story (page 6).

Ask the group to imagine it’s hot, and they’ve been playing football, shopping, or walking home from school. They’re thirsty. They turn on the tap for a cool glass of water, but nothing comes out. How would they feel? What would they do?

Imagine there’s a water shortage and water needs saving. How could they do this (for example, by not flushing the toilet every time they use it, fewer baths and showers, washing clothes by hand instead of in a washing machine)? What changes would be hardest?

It’s really difficult for us to imagine not having water ‘on tap’, but for millions of people around the world, having clean, piped water is just a dream.

Introduce your group to Angel and Rosena, a brother and sister who live in a village in Zambia. Read and discuss their story. Can your group imagine how Angel and Rosena felt, having no choice but to drink water they knew was dirty?

It’s not fair! (10 mins)

**Aim:** to show that for many people around the world, fetching water takes up a lot of time and the task is not fairly shared.

**You’ll need:** lots of two-litre plastic bottles filled with water; a few carrier bags.

Split the group in two. One group sits down to relax, while the other takes turns to race to the end of the room to collect bottles of water (some may want to carry more than one at a time) and return to their team. After a couple of minutes, stop the game and see how much water they’ve collected. Ask both groups what they would be able to do with this amount of water. Can they imagine carrying five of these bottles (i.e. 10 litres) for 45 minutes (you could invite them to try lifting five bottles in two carrier bags)? What activities or things would they miss out on if they had to collect the water they needed every day?

Now tell the group who did the collecting that they must share the water with the group that’s been sitting down. How does each group feel about this? Explain that in many cultures, it’s the women and girls who have to collect water for the family, often missing out on going to school, playing and even sleeping.

Rosena feels strongly about this: “As soon as I opened my eyes at 6am we would head to the river – me and my mother and my sister Patricia. My brothers refused to draw water for the family – they said it was a girl’s job. I think it’s an unfair rule and that mothers should encourage their sons to fetch water. I think we should all be responsible for collecting water, it’s important to work together and share our resources.”

**Questions for discussion:**

- How would you feel if you were in Rosena’s position? What would you do?
- Just because something has always been done a certain way, does it make it right?
- How can we challenge things we don’t think are fair?
Making waves (10 mins)

**Aim:** to inspire your group to take action.

“I pay tribute to the scientists who detected the problem, the campaigners who fought to bring it to public attention, the green movement that mobilised for change, and above all, the members of the public who wrote to us in record numbers, asking for a bill that met the scale of the challenge.” Ed Miliband MP, leader of the Labour Party and former Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, referring to lobbying on the UK Climate Change Act.

Read out the quote above. When we work together, real change is possible. Thanks to CAFOD campaigners, we’ve achieved some great results: our government is now a world leader on climate change, working for a greener future for us all – including people in poorer countries who are already seeing changes to their weather that make it harder for them to grow crops and get clean water.

Get chatting

If you’ve extra time, ask small groups to imagine they’re interviewing the young people, asking questions about life before and after the changes. Write up as a magazine article or perform to the rest of the group as a chat show.
Now... Join in!

Make a sign saying ‘[insert group’s name here] is thirsty for change. David Cameron, take the G8 from words to action and turn the tide on water poverty’.

Ask each member of your group to add their name to a water droplet (see the template to photocopy on page 8) and display your group’s droplets under the sign. Together, everyone’s droplets will form a ‘river of change’.

Display your group’s ‘river of change’ to raise awareness of the campaign, perhaps leaving some blank droplets for other people to add their names to. Ideas for a display include pinning the drops and the sign to blue material to create an ocean, or hanging the droplets from blue threads in a doorway or against a wall to create a waterfall.

Send your ‘river of change’ to us with the return form (see page 7) by 1 May 2012 and we’ll deliver it with thousands of others to make a real splash: we want David Cameron to see just how many people are thirsting for change.

Reflection and prayer (10 mins)

‘Let justice flow like a river and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.’ Amos 5:24

You’ll need: a world map; a tea-light for each member of your group; matches to light the candles. You may wish to display quotes and stats around the map (downloadable at cafod.org.uk/thirst).

You can order a Peter’s Projection world map from CAFOD by calling us on 0300 011 5680. The map costs £2.50, plus P&P.

Africa is not the only place where people struggle to get clean water and safe sanitation. Large parts of Latin America and Asia are also affected by the world water crisis. Encourage group members to light and place a candle on any of the continents on the world map to show they’re keeping people in their prayers. You could end by praying together:

Creator God, we hold before you all the people around the world who still do not have access to clean, safe water. Through the help of our gifts, prayers and actions, may their lives change for the better. Amen.

What next?

1: Go to cafod.org.uk/thirst for updates on the campaign, plus lots of other resources, including: a PowerPoint presentation featuring some of the young people from this session, curriculum links, a great short film and more.

2: Download a sheet of quotes and stats from cafod.org.uk/thirst and display them in shared areas (for example, toilets, common rooms, kitchens and above drinking fountains) to remind people what a precious resource water is – and not to waste it.

3: Use water themes to fundraise for CAFOD! You could offer to wash cars for a small fee, or ask people to ‘spend a penny’ by making a small donation every time they use the toilet during one day/week, or get sponsored to ‘walk for water’.
**Case studies**

**Angel and Rosena**

Angel, 15, and his sister Rosena, 11, live in a village in Lusitu, Zambia. Until recently, whenever the tap in their village broke down, the family’s nearest source of water was the local river, a 45-minute walk away.

The family had to collect every drop of water they needed for drinking, washing, watering crops, cooking, and cleaning – a lot of the collecting was done by the girls. “Fetching water from the river was tiring,” says Rosena. “The walk home was worse because we were carrying heavy containers on our heads.” But that wasn’t the only problem.

“We were drinking from the same place as the cattle,” explains Angel. “The droppings from the animals would go into the water.” Then there was an outbreak of cholera, a disease caused by drinking dirty water. “My grandmother died of cholera,” says Rosena. “I go to her grave every day and say a prayer.”

CAFOD has helped Angel and Rosena’s community with a borehole and rainwater harvesting. Now it’s just ten minutes’ walk to collect water. “Since the borehole arrived things are good because the water is near, and it is clean and free from animal droppings,” says Angel. “No-one has got sick from cholera since the borehole arrived so we are now less scared of getting cholera.”

“I gave thanks to God when the borehole was drilled because it has made life so much easier,” adds Rosena. “My neck used to ache a lot, sometimes it stopped me sleeping. But now we don’t have to walk as far, the pain has gone away.”

**Tinotenda and Talent**

Tinotenda, 14, and his sister Talent, 9, live in a village in Gokwe (pronounced ‘gok-way’) in Zimbabwe. “I wish I had water at my school because sometimes I get thirsty and there is nothing to drink. It is hard to concentrate when I am thirsty,” says Talent. “I go to the river three times a day to get water. If I didn’t have to go to the river I could play with my friends.”

“We see cows, goats, donkeys and pigs all drinking at the river. We have diarrhoea from the water – once we both got it. My tummy was aching. It lasted for four to five days. I am scared of getting sick from the water again.”

Tinotenda and Talent also have to carry water to school. All the children bring up to two litres of water each day to school for drinking, cleaning, and for washing hands. It’s hard work. “We would like a borehole. If we had a borehole we could get water quickly – we wouldn’t be late for school and we could get home quickly after school” says Tinotenda.

And it’s not just drinking water that’s a problem. “I don’t like going to the toilet in the bush – there are flies in the bush and they bring us infections,” explains Tinotenda. CAFOD have now helped Tinotenda and Talent’s family with a latrine, but Noel, a teacher at their school, says: “Most people don’t have toilets, so their waste is just washed into the river. There are lots of children who miss school two or three times a week through outbreaks of diarrhoea or stomach pains.”

**Thando and Zimi**

Thando, 15, and his cousin Zimi, 10, live in a village in Hwange (pronounced ‘wan-gay’) in Zimbabwe.

Getting clean water is a big problem in some parts of Zimbabwe because the government cannot afford to repair and maintain the water pipes and sewage works. Many homes and schools are without running water, or pipes and drains to take waste water away. Teenage girls are often forced to miss school, particularly during their period, just because there’s nowhere for them to go the toilet hygienically and privately. Going to the toilet out in the bush also risks being attacked by insects, animals and other people.

“You don’t think much about water until there is a problem getting it,” says Zimi. “Then you think about it all the time. If water isn’t available, how do I clean my face? If we don’t have water, we can’t wash our hands.”

CAFOD has helped Thando and Zimi’s family with a toilet, and their community with a borehole. “Now the borehole is working, we can drink, wash, cook and look after ourselves. Before, I spent most of my spare time fetching water, but now I can do fun stuff too,” says Zimi.

“Having good toilets has improved our health,” adds Thando. “It’s rare for pupils to be off school with stomach problems these days.”

Barnibas, a teacher at Zimi’s school, says: “When water is available, children come to school because they don’t have to spend their day looking around for water. When families have water, children look clean, they wash, they take pride in their appearance. When children are healthier, they do well in their work and school attendance improves.”
To help us count your actions, please complete this box and send it with your ‘river of change’ to: The Campaigns Team, CAFOD, Romero House, 55 Westminster Bridge Road, London, SE1 7JB by 1 May 2012. We’ll take them to No. 10 before the G8 meets later on in May.

Group or school name:

Group or school address:

How many took action?  

How many participants were under 18?  

Was the campaign action initiated by young people?  Yes  No  

If yes, how many young people led the activity?  

We will only use the information above to record that the activity has taken place. If you are happy for your group to be featured on our website, please provide your details below so we can contact you for further information.

Name:  

Telephone:  

Email:  

And we’d love to see photos of your group in action! Please send them to us at campaigns@cafod.org.uk

Thank you for taking action! We’ll make sure your voices get heard.

cafod.org.uk/thirst
Please photocopy this water droplet

for every member of your group and ask them to include their first name, a reflection, and a message to government about the issues they have just heard about. Then put everyone’s drops together to form your ‘river of change’ and after displaying it, send it to us to pass on to David Cameron by 1 May 2012. Thank you!