

# HOLDING A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

Holding a candlelight vigil is a powerful way to make a statement and educate your community. A candlelight vigil can help illuminate the poverty that people will face if they do not pass the Jubilee Act. Each day thousands of people needlessly suffer because they do not have adequate healthcare, housing or access to clean water. One of the ways that you can participate in our February week of action is to hold a candle light vigil in your community.



## TIPS ON HOW TO ORGANIZE

A candlelight vigil is quite simple to set up and organize.

The main goal is to get the word out that the vigil will be taking place so that you'll enjoy a large turnout. There are, however, several things to consider first.

### Step 1 Choosing a Location and Time

The first thing that needs to be decided is the location for the event. Most are held outdoors on public property, like a neighborhood park, or even right in front of your Member of Congress' local office. Consider the following things when choosing your location:

- ◇ The place should be easy to find for participants from all over town. .
- ◇ Ideally, you should have an indoor option available in case of bad weather. Indoor vigils can be held in community centers, auditoriums, or legion halls.
- ◇ Please be sure to contact your recreation and parks department or your local city hall to see if you need a permit before holding your event.

The place where your vigil will take place will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Once you've selected a location, choose a date the week of February 15th and a time that will work for the occasion. Make sure it will be dark enough for all of the candles to have an impact, but not too late at night that participants of all ages would have trouble attending.

The date and time of your vigil will be \_\_\_\_\_.

### Step 2: Designate a Master of Ceremony for the event

To keep things running smoothly, someone should be designated the main speaker or master of ceremonies. This person will address the crowd. The person who will be responsible for heading the ceremonies will be \_\_\_\_\_.

Jubilee USA Network has also compiled stories from the global south that can be read during your vigil. For a collection of stories for participants to read at your candle light vigil, please contact Brooke Harper at 202-783-3566 ext. 103 or email her at [brooke@jubileeusa.org](mailto:brooke@jubileeusa.org). The person who will collect the readings from Jubilee USA Network will be \_\_\_\_\_.

### Step 3: Event Logistics

Of course you'll have to have a supply of candles (and matches or lighter) on hand for participants to light. Order these in advance so that, if it looks like you'll end up with a very large turnout, you'll have time to get more.

You'll also want to make copies of the program and short information sheets to distribute to passersby. Jubilee USA has samples on our website.

The person who will be responsible for providing candles for the event is \_\_\_\_\_.

The person responsible for making copies of the program and information sheets is \_\_\_\_\_.

The people responsible for bringing a clipboard and the Jubilee Act petition is: \_\_\_\_\_.

### Step 4: Getting the Word Out

Once you've got everything in place for the event, you'll need to spread the word so that people will be able to attend. There are several ways to advertise a candlelight vigil, including:

- ◇ Posting printed fliers in neighborhoods, stores, and public bulletin boards (you can download a sample flyer from the Jubilee USA website)
- ◇ Contacting local media with details of the event (see press release below)
- ◇ Contacting relevant groups
- ◇ Word of mouth is also an important and valuable source of contact. Tell as many people as you can about the upcoming vigil, and ask them to tell anyone they know who might be interested in attending.
- ◇ Be sure to contact Brooke Harper for a list of Jubilee supporters in your area and for help to be sure that your event is well attended. Please call or email at 202-783-3566 ext 103 or brooke@jubileeusa.org
- ◇ Brainstorm a list of ways that you will advertise and groups that you can do outreach to to make your vigil well attended.

Potential Attendees (Groups, Congregations, Media Outlets)	Person Responsible for Contact
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- |          |       |
|----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |

## AGENDA FOR CANDLELIGHT VIGIL

- I. Introduction (5 minutes)
- II. Host gives remarks about Jubilee (5 minutes) (see below)
- III. Host lights a candle and invites volunteers to hold up their candles or flashlights
- IV. Host asks everyone to read a story about a person from the Global South who has been affected by the debt crisis (30 minutes)
- V. Host leads interfaith prayer followed by a minute of silence (5 minutes)
- VI. Closing Remarks or Prayer (see below)

## OPENING REMARKS AND TALKING POINTS

Nearly one billion people in the world today live on less than a \$1 a day. We are gathered here tonight on their behalf to shed a light on their plight and to stand together and say that:

**“We will not stand for the burden that debt places on our brothers and sisters in the global south. We will not stand idly by as they hunger for food, clean water, and the basic needs that every human being deserves. Instead we will call for change tonight and break the chains of debt.”**

We must urge our leaders to break the chains of debt that places a stranglehold on the people of global south.

We must call on our leaders to pass the Jubilee Act and make real change in fighting poverty across the world.

- ◇ Debt has devastated nations. Instead of providing for their citizens low income countries pay nearly \$90 million a day in external debt payments.
- ◇ The economic crisis will force at least 90 million people into extreme poverty this year.
- ◇ For every \$1 received in aid grants, low income countries pay \$2.30 in debt service.
- ◇ Many African countries spend more on repaying debt than on either health or education.
- ◇ Debt cost lives. Everyday more than 16,000 children die from hunger-related illnesses.
- ◇ Today more than 11 million children under the age of 15 living in Sub-Saharan Africa have lost one or both parents because of HIV/AIDS.
- ◇ One woman dies every minute as a result of problems in pregnancy or childbirth. Across much of Africa and South Asia pregnancy and childbirth represent the single biggest cause of mortality among women of childbearing age. -Source Catholic Relief Services
- ◇ In Ghana, the money saved through debt relief is being used for basic infrastructure, including rural feeder roads, as well as increased expenditure on education and health care.
- ◇ In Tanzania, the government is using the money saved to import vital food supplies for those affected by drought.
- ◇ In Burundi, elimination of school fees in 2005 allowed an additional 300,000 children to enroll.
- ◇ In Zambia, 4,500 new teachers have been hired and fees for rural healthcare have been abolished.
- ◇ In Honduras, debt relief is to be allocated to eliminate annual fees charged for primary education, which is expected to increase enrollment from low-income families

There is so much work to be done. Starting with this vigil tonight, we can all make a difference.

## CLOSING PRAYER

Creator God,

We join to praise you knowing that you are a God who has come to share in the common lot. Yet we mourn our fractured human community and confess the shame of our silence in the face of injustice. Teach us by your Spirit to live as Christ and to serve others. May we remember today those who live, those who have died, and those who work to change your world. We pray that we too may be a spokespeople for your justice in order to change lives- to end debts- to make your Kingdom real.

Amen.

## MAKING IT EVEN BETTER...

- 1) Have a copies of the program for the candlelight vigil.
- 2) Be sure to have a sign in station where people can sign in so that you can follow up with them and grow the Jubilee family in your community!

# SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Date  
For more information: Name, (Phone)

## Shining A Light on Global Poverty

**WHAT:** The First Baptist Church and local members of the Jubilee USA Network, will “Shine a Light on Global Poverty” – by holding a candlelight vigil to illuminate the growing humanitarian crisis in the global south brought about by the staggering debt that poor countries have to repay to the wealthy countries and the unreasonable conditions on debt relief for all indebted countries.

**WHERE:** Across the country, Jubilee supporters, congregations, and activists across the country are speaking out against debt relief. Along with our event at First Baptist Church located at (address) there will be candle light vigils held in MA, IN, OK, CT and FL.

**WHEN:** February 15th at 6:30 PM

**WHY:** More than one billion people are living on less than a dollar a day, and yet poor countries are forced to send \$100 million per day to wealthy countries in debt service. For every \$1 received in aid grants, low income countries pay \$2.30 in debt service payments. These crippling debts have devastating effects on these countries. Their citizens go without education, adequate housing, and access to clean water because their countries funds are diverted for debt service payments rather than spent on their citizens’ vital needs.

Jubilee USA is working towards the passage of the Jubilee Act for Responsible Lending and Expanded Debt Cancellation. This legislation would provide debt relief to an additional 22 countries who desperately need it. As we turn to our Members of Congress, we want them to know that their constituents are speaking out against the atrocities caused by insurmountable debt and are urging them to pass the Jubilee Act.

Activists, supporters and communities of faith across the country are calling for change to break the chains of debt and the the passage of the Jubilee Act.

For more information about Jubilee USA, visit [www.jubileeusa.org](http://www.jubileeusa.org).