



Stories of Hope

A **Church Resource Pack** from Scotland's international Christian healthcare charity

EMMSInternational
Health for Today, Hope for Tomorrow



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WELCOME

EMMS International traces its roots back to the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. It was founded in 1841 with a purpose of training and equipping doctors for Christian service overseas. Dr David Livingstone was a corresponding member and part of the rich tapestry of the society's early membership.

Today, as Scotland's international Christian healthcare charity, EMMS International is at the forefront of tackling some of today's biggest healthcare challenges. Fuelled by the generosity and prayers of many individuals, churches and groups, we have helped over 1 million people in the last 7 years. We are delighted to share this with you and to be partners in bringing health and hope in Scotland, Malawi, India and Nepal.

ABOUT THIS PACK

Thank you for choosing to share the work of EMMS International. Stories of Hope is a resource to inspire you and your congregation through examples of the work of EMMS International, inspired by our Christian values and mission. The stories and accompanying suggestions can be used as a full order of service or by taking elements to integrate within your own regular worship.

EXTRA RESOURCES

You can find Powerpoint slides, videos and the latest stories from EMMS International on our website. You can also book a speaker from EMMS to join you in person. More at www.emms.org/church

What is hope?

Is it a dream, something we would like, but doubt we'll achieve or attain? The modern idea of hope is to wish for, to expect, but without certainty our wishes will be fulfilled.

The hope we find in Jesus, however, is an indication of certainty. "Hope" in scripture means "a strong and confident expectation." Such hope is not as common today and might even be seen as naive, but for Christians hope is founded on trust and a confident expectation.

We all hope for different things, tangible and intangible, for today or for further into the future. Today, we want to share stories of hope from around the world that remind us that hopes are fulfilled and to encourage us to keep on hoping and working to make those dreams a reality. We will do so through hearing the stories of people who have found health and hope through the work of the Christian international healthcare charity, EMMS International.

STORIES OF HOPE

Here are three stories of hope from the work of EMMS International that you could share on a Sunday or in a small group meeting.

MIRIAM'S STORY

Miriam lives in a village in Malawi and, like many other young girls and women, she works long hard days in the fields tending to crops. Miriam was pregnant and her baby was due at any moment. Unlike here in Scotland, where employees can start maternity leave a few weeks before their due date, Miriam was working in the fields on the day her waters broke. Her journey as a mother began in a hot dry field.

Now that journey was one of hope, as she mounted the back of a bicycle with her mother to begin travelling the 20km to the Nkomaula Health Centre, over bumpy roads, through the Phalombe plains, passing dried-out rivers. Her first hope was that she would make it to the hospital safely and in plenty of time for the delivery of her first child. The journey was like the one her mother had taken years before to have Miriam delivered.

During the cycle, Miriam hoped for a clean hospital, clean running water and medical staff who would wait on her hand and foot, she hoped for a safe birth and, most of all, she hoped for a healthy, happy child.

When she arrived, tired and weary, many of those hopes were dashed. There was no mains water supply, sanitary facilities were non-existent, her mother was asked to fetch water from the nearest well or from the river if the hand pump was not working and, with no electricity, the midwife had to deliver Miriam's baby by torch light. Then, shortly after giving birth the only way Miriam was able to clean herself was with water from a bucket whilst trying to stay out of the view of others behind a tattered bamboo fence.

In fact, the facilities had not really improved since her mother had given birth to Miriam.

Can you imagine how that would feel? Let's just take a moment to reflect on Miriam's journey.

Now, this story does have a positive ending. Miriam gave birth to a happy, healthy girl and named her Brenda. Now



Miriam is hoping and praying that, by the time Brenda is a mother, her experience will be much better.

EMMS International aims to supply 20 rural health centres in Malawi with the gift of clean running water to ensure young mothers like Miriam can give their new-born babies the best start in life.

Prayer of Worship

Merciful God,

We thank You that You are our God of hope. That today and every day Your mercies are new and so we can have fresh hope for each day.

We say sorry for the times when we forget that fact and look to ourselves or others to give hope. But again, we give thanks that, despite our shortcomings, we are never without the hope that comes through Your forgiveness which was secured by Your son, Jesus.

Amen

Suggested Scripture Readings

The stories might fit well with your own planned teaching and readings. However, if you're preparing a special service you might consider the following scripture readings:

Luke 8:40-48 - a woman healed after touching Jesus' cloak

1 Peter 5:10-11 - hope in the God of grace

Romans 15:4 - endurance towards hope

Psalms 27 - hope in the face of adversity

STORIES OF HOPE

SUNTALI'S STORY

The next story is about a lady called Suntali, from a small village in Nepal. Now, Suntali was a widow with two young children. Having lost her husband, she found herself penniless and homeless.

Her health was also very fragile. She was in daily pain from leprosy and had been diagnosed with malignant skin cancer. Suntali had reached the point where she could easily question if life held any hope for her at all.

But still, she hoped and prayed for help and support, she hoped the pain would stop, she hoped for a safe place for her children to grow up, she hoped to recover and not just survive but thrive.

Can you imagine how Suntali must have felt with all those negatives in her life?

Now here is the great news. Suntali became a patient at the EMMS-funded Palliative Care Centre at Green Pastures Hospital in Pokhara, which is run by EMMS International's long-term mission partner, INF Nepal. Her young family moved into a Christian children's home near the hospital where they are safe and happy and can continue with their education, Suntali receives person-centred care and is now in remission and managing her symptoms. She has hope for a brighter future.

Suntali now knows that her life matters and she has hope for the future.



Songs of Worship

We suggest choosing songs that reflect the theme of hope and that remind us that, even in times of adversity, the hope we find in Jesus is not diminished.

You might consider:

May the God of hope go with us every day (CH 256)

Give me oil in my lamp (Mission Praise 167)

Bread of life and hope of the world (CH 663)

In our lives plant seeds of Hope (CH 349)

All my Hope on God is founded (CH 192)

Children's Activity

Why not ask the children what they are hoping for? This could be what they're hoping for today or in the future, small things or big things. If there is time and space to do so within the service, you could ask the children (and adults!) to write or draw what they are hoping for and gather them in to read out and share with the whole congregation. You could share a story of one of your childhood hopes and how it was fulfilled to get things started.

STORIES OF HOPE

MADEN'S STORY

Maden was a young boy in a family of six and he lived in the village of Taronga in Nepal, Maden was just coming to terms with the news that his father was ill and living with bowel cancer when tragedy struck. Maden was out playing and having adventures as children do. On this day he decided to climb trees in search of fresh fruit. He saw the ripest orange at the top of the tree and, whilst he stretched out his arm in excitement, the branch gave way and he fell 6 metres to the hard ground below. Fracturing his wrist and damaging his spinal cord, he was paralysed from the waist down and lost control of his bladder and bowels.

As there were no roads, Maden was strapped to his uncle's back and was carried over the mountains to the nearest hospital. When they arrived the diagnosis was poor. Maden was basically told he had 3 months to live, his wrist was poorly bandaged together and he was sent home to die.

Almost a year later, Maden's father talked to a man in his village who made him aware of the EMMS-supported INF clinic in Surkhet, that may be able to help Maden. This gave his dad hope and they visited the very next day.

Maden was assessed, he had corrective surgery on his wrist and was taught to write with his left hand and manoeuvre his wheelchair single-handedly in the months of recovery. He was also moved into a specially adapted house nearer to his school. The house, in which he lived with his grandmother, had widened doors, a wheelchair-friendly toilet and specially adapted cooking area and his school even had a ramp installed.

Maden has gone from believing he only had months to live, to having hope and dreams of the future. His dad was so inspired by the help that his family received that he now helps others.



Prayer for the world

Eternal God,

We thank You that the light of hope we find in Jesus cannot be diminished by our circumstances. We look around our communities and the world and we see crises and trials that cast great shadows – hunger and conflict, disease and disaster. Give us the perspective to look upon these circumstances and say that our hope is not diminished. Give us the boldness to use our own words, actions and resources to bring hope in our world.

We thank You for the frontline healthcare workers that EMMS International partners with in Malawi, India and Nepal. We give thanks for the compassionate care they give, just as Jesus did. We pray You would give them the strength and perseverance they need to fight sickness, disease and poverty in their communities. We ask that in their work, they would not only bring something of Jesus to each individual and each family, but that they would also find You already there, reflected in the faces of the people they care for.

In Jesus' name. Amen

Blessing

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may flourish in faith, hope and love, through the power of the Holy Spirit. May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shelter your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen

HOPE IN ACTION

Thank you for sharing these stories of hope. We would love to partner with your church or small group to continue sharing health and hope. You can do that in a number of ways and these are just an example. If you're interested in taking your partnership further, please contact us directly using the details on the back of this resource pack.

Become a Champion of Change By signing up to a regular gift from £3.50 a month you are joining a thriving community that has come together to be part of EMMS International's work of bringing health and hope. You'll be helping to improve healthcare access for those living in extreme poverty.

Could you give people in your church the chance to sign up to become a Champion of Change? You can direct them to our website or we can provide sign-up forms. Just let us know ahead of your event.

Pray with us We share regular prayer updates on our website and host online prayer gatherings where you can hear from our partners directly and pray with them. Find out more at www.emms.org/pray

Hold a Coffee Morning You don't really need an excuse to get together over coffee and cakes, but raising vital funds to support frontline healthcare workers is a pretty good one! Hosting a coffee morning, bake sale or other fundraising activity is a great way to share health and hope. Let us know if we can support you with extra information or resources.

Special Collection If you're sharing our Stories of Hope then a special offering is a great way to give people the opportunity to respond.

Become an Ambassador Spread the word about EMMS International in your church community and encourage others to pray for and support our vital work.

For all our latest fundraising events and challenges that you can join individually or as a group, visit www.emms.org



Your support means people receive the care and compassion they deserve. By giving and praying you are helping to create more stories of hope.

EMMS International

Health for Today, Hope for Tomorrow

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