

# WELLS FOR INDIA LENT 2007



## Sitting on One Carpet With the People of Rajasthan

“The Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression”

Deuteronomy 26 v7

This Lent, Wells for India is asking churches and supporting groups to come and ‘sit on one carpet’ alongside some of the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in rural Rajasthan, to find a way forward out of the poverty trap to a life of dignity.

Here some villages are so remote they are not even registered.

Here the women and girl children face a life which is described officially as ‘a cycle of suffering from birth to death.’

Rajasthan is roughly the same size as the United Kingdom and has a similar population of about 60 million.

Of these, 15 million people are living below the \$1US a day poverty line. In 2006 **Wells for India** programmes were supporting over 18,000 of the poorest families living in remote rural villages.

This Lent material is based on the RCL readings for Lent 1 Year C  
Material includes a Guided Meditation, Responsorial Prayer, & suggestions for Children’s Activities and Worship

## Wells for India

*Bringing water security and dignity to the poorest communities of rural Rajasthan*

Telephone: 01962 848 043 Email: [office@wellsforindia.org](mailto:office@wellsforindia.org)

Wells for India, The Winchester Centre, 68 St George’s Street, Winchester SO23 8AH, UK

[www.wellsforindia.org](http://www.wellsforindia.org)



## INTRODUCTION:

***“The Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression”  
Deuteronomy 26 v.7***

- RCL Lent 1 Year C Readings: Deuteronomy 26. 1-11; Psalm 91. 1-2, 9-16; Luke 4. 1-13
- Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness. At the time of his testing He was physically weak and vulnerable.  
The people of rural Rajasthan are also weak and vulnerable as they endure the cycle of despair and suffering from one generation to the next as they live in their wilderness of poverty.

## RESPONSORIAL PRAYER:

### THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE OF RURAL RAJASTHAN

**Be with us, O Lord, in our trouble**

**We desire.....**

to walk the path of a healthy life until we reach the length of a normal lifespan.....  
to walk the path of love for family and friends.....  
to walk the path of concern for the animals, plants and environment in our care....

**Be with us, O Lord, in our trouble**

**We yearn.....**

to walk away from the cycle of suffering and despair in our lives.....  
to walk away from the enslavement of poverty.....  
to walk away from the torment of infant mortality....

**Be with us, O Lord, in our trouble**

**We hope.....**

to walk towards a future of education and creative fulfilment for our children.....  
to walk towards a future with access to clean water and health care for all...  
to walk towards a future of social justice...

**Be with us, O Lord, in our trouble**

*Lord, you want what is best for all your children, particularly those who are suffering from poverty, oppression and injustice in your world. Give us the will to bring hope and dignity to the people of rural Rajasthan through the work of **Wells for India**.  
Amen*

## **A GUIDED MEDITATION:**

### **The Gathering:**

We are led by the Spirit, in love, to come and sit on one 'carpet' with the people of Rajasthan..... ( the 'carpet' is a symbolic space)

As we approach the 'carpet'....

We remove... our shoes... symbols of wealth which cushion our lives in the UK... stripped of our material wealth we can share, for a short time, the experience of vulnerability with the people of rural Rajasthan.....

We remove .... our outer protective garments of prejudice, ignorance and fear about other people's lives.... our minds are opened to different cultures and religious beliefs .....

We leave behind our own everyday worries and concerns ....we make space in our hearts for each other...

We sit on one carpet together.... side by side...shoulder to shoulder ...all ages....of different faiths, cultures, social groups and Indian castes.... listening to each other's concerns... briefly touching each other's lives....

### **Who is on the carpet?**

We look around to see who is on the carpet with us.....

We see.... the babies being held in the arms of their mothers from the villages of Rajasthan.... many of these babies will die before they reach school age....tears will soon replace the smiles of these mothers....

We see...the laughing children... half of these children will be denied the opportunity to attend a school.... only one in five of the girls will be able to read...the Indian Government acknowledges that the girls will endure a cycle of suffering from birth to death....

We see...the women who are forced to walk many kilometres every day to supply their families with life-giving water... the men suffering the frustrations and despair of their poverty... the poverty that will result in the shortened life expectancy of adults...

### **Challenges on the carpet....**

As we sit on one carpet with the people of rural Rajasthan...

We hear.... our Creator God challenging us to be good stewards of the earth and all that dwells on it.... the plants, the animals and other people .....

We hear the cries of the poorest people in Rajasthan who live beyond the reach of the benefits of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that we take for granted.... they live 'Life on the edge'... for them, Global Warming is a matter of drought or flood...starvation or drowning.... life or death....

**Wells for India** hears the cries of the rural communities of Rajasthan....'water harvesting' programmes respond to their needs ....clean and plentiful supplies of drinking water ....crops can be grown and animals can be kept in environmentally vulnerable conditions....

We are here on the 'carpet' .... we have a choice...either, we can get up, walk away and forget about the others we have seen and heard on the 'carpet' today... or, we can stay, listen to their voices and open our hearts to the people of Rajasthan.

## Taking off our shoes and sitting on one carpet with the people of Rajasthan

### CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES:

#### OPENING ACTIVITY:

Shoes in the UK – a selection of shoes used for different activities from youngsters and from leaders to discuss what each is used for...( as wide a range of footwear as possible)  
This range of shoes is an indication of the wealth in the UK – in Rajasthan shoes, if worn by children, are purely functional

#### BIBLE STORY:

Luke 4. 1-13 read and possibly acted out using a Children's Bible

#### DISCUSS:

- What would it have been like to be in the desert, as Jesus was, for 40 days?
- What would Jesus have been wearing on his feet to walk over sand, stones and rocks?
- While Jesus was in the wilderness he came to big decisions about how he was going to live his life.

This morning we are going '**to take off our shoes and sit down on a carpet with the people of Rajasthan**' so that we can glimpse for a short time what life is like in their shoes.

#### ACTIVITIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE CLOSING WORSHIP:

- **Walking barefoot** over a number of different materials /surfaces whilst blindfolded – experiencing the contrasting 'feel' of what they are walking on. ( If possible include a container with sand and one with gravel as well a fur fabric, wood block flooring, cement floor, linoleum etc) The idea is to experience the vulnerability when not wearing protective shoes. Link with children living in the Thar Desert and Jesus, when he was in the wilderness, who probably wore a form of sandal to walk over sand and rocky paths.
- **Barefoot outlines of feet** cut out – one pair from each child cut from newspapers – and one pair cut from fashion magazines. (Keep to one side because these foot outlines will be used in the worship time.... )
- **Making the flag for India** – lining paper marked out as 3 horizontal areas. A collage of footprints can be done ( orange paint – top band; leave a band of white in the middle; green paint – bottom band) MESSY! If you prefer, you could use footprints already cut out from orange and green sugar paper stuck on to the regions.
- **Decorating stones** – a selection of stones of medium size and flattish will be needed. They can decorate one of the surfaces. (In the closing worship they will firstly put the grey side uppermost and then turn them over to the coloured side.)
- **Lent 2007 Collection Boxes for Wells for India**
- **Picture gallery** - 4-5 pictures with short captions to illustrate different ways in which life is hard for the children in the villages of Rajasthan.

**As the children, in small groups, look at the pictures they should be encouraged to compare the luxury of their own lives with the hardness of these 'stones' in the lives of the children in rural Rajasthan.**

## CLOSING WORSHIP:

### **You will need:**

- A piece of carpet (or a symbolic space on the floor to be the carpet) for the group to sit on.
- A large outline map of India on lining paper with the region of Rajasthan marked on it. (Place this on the 'carpet')
- The flag of India – (Place this on the 'carpet')
- The 'feet' cut out from magazines and newspapers
- Each of the pictures from the gallery to be given to different children who would be willing to say something about the picture in the worship time.

Some quiet background music from a worship songs CD to be played during the meditation.

LEADER:

***We are going to take off our shoes and sit on the carpet with the children of Rajasthan***

(lead the children to sit on the carpet that is already set out on the floor)

SING – He's got the whole world in his hands

LEADER: ( Using actions for bold words – practice with the group before you begin the worship)

**Let us hear with our ears, listen with our hearts and respond with love** as we think of lives of the children in Rajasthan.....

We are going to place the newspaper feet in a pile in the centre of the white part of the Indian flag..... these feet help us to think of the many children in India who are too poor to have shoes.....

**Let us hear with our ears, listen with our hearts and respond with love**

As we put the feet from fashion magazines in a ring around the outside of those feet of the poor, we pray that those who have more money may hear the cries of the poor....

**Let us hear with our ears, listen with our hearts and respond with love**

We have felt what it is like to be barefoot this morning.... Stones can be very hard to walk on without shoes... Let us place the stones in the area of Rajasthan on the map of India ( dark side up!)

**Let us hear with our ears, listen with our hearts and respond with love**

As we think of lives of the children in Rajasthan....(each of the pictures is to be placed on the carpet with a few words being said by the child putting it down....)

We have heard how the lives of the children in the villages of Rajasthan are so different from ours. help us to share our love with them and with all children who are different from us around the world...

**Let us hear with our ears, listen with our hearts and respond with love**

*We thank you Lord that you sent your Son to earth to help us make the right choices in our lives. This Lent we thank you for the chance to help your children in Rajasthan by supporting the work of **Wells for India**. Amen*

The worship finishes with the children turning their stones to the coloured sides .....this will symbolise the hope that their money will give to the children in Rajasthan.

The children can be given the **Lent 2007** collection boxes for **Wells for India** as they leave.

**Pictures for the Gallery and suggested captions**



In the villages of Rajasthan children of all ages go about their daily lives without shoes on their feet.



Without an access to education in schools many doors to careers are closed to the children in Rajasthan

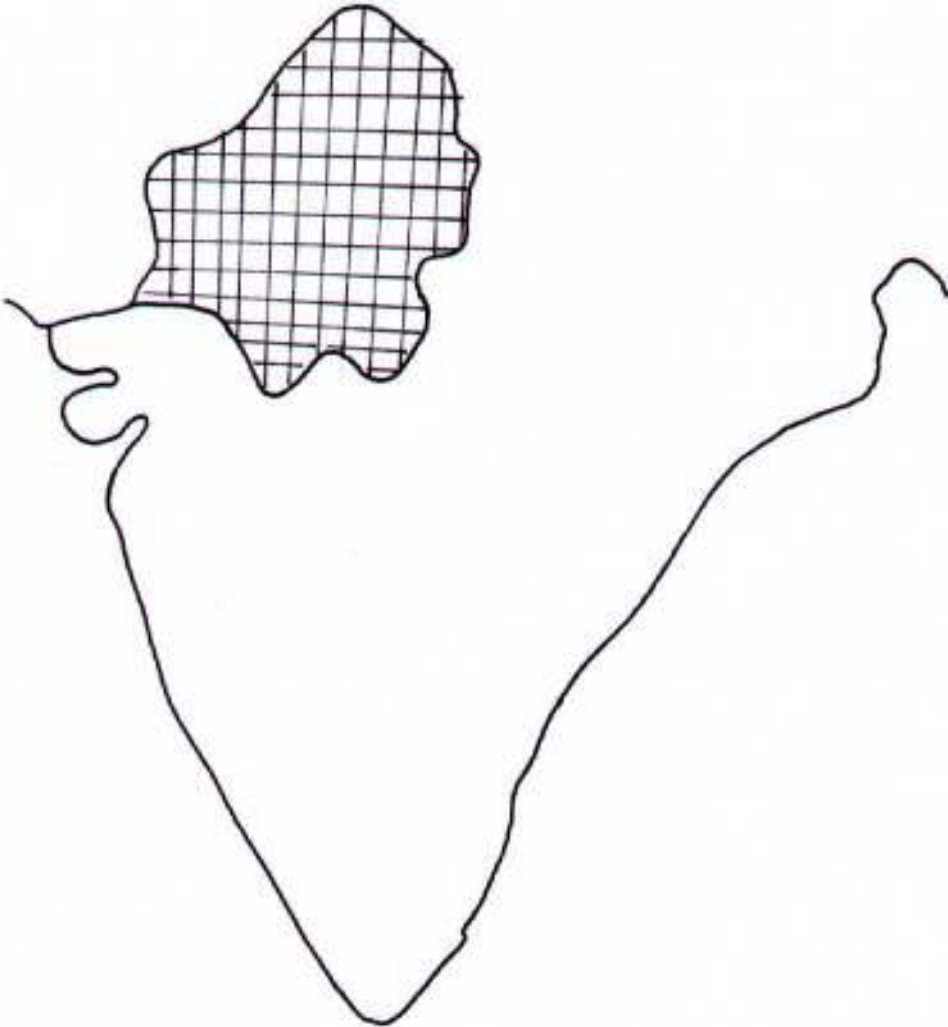


Young girls in Rajasthan are expected to help their mothers with the collection of water for the family



Here is a mother in a village in Rajasthan preparing a meal for her family....does your kitchen look like this?

**Map of India showing Rajasthan:**



## LENT 2007 Collection Box

- Photocopy the outlines on to white card
- Cut around the solid lines
- Decorate the blank sides
- Glue the flaps inside the box

