

Ideas for sermons dealing with malaria

These sermon guides have been used by Christian and Muslim leaders who are involved with Faiths Act in Sierra Leone. Please feel free to adapt them and use them in your community, and use them alongside the other volunteer resources at www.faithsact.org.

Whether you live in a country affected by malaria or just want to inspire your community about Faiths Act, we want to hear about your faith inspiration. So send your sermon or talk about multi-faith action or malaria to faithsact@tonyblairfaithfoundation.org for a chance to share it with the whole Faiths Act global movement! We are developing materials from across many different faith communities so the team would love to hear from you.

How to present the malaria messages with a focus on Children:

Aim:

1. To raise awareness of the malaria risks that children face due to their lower immunity
2. To stress the importance of caring for and teaching children about the use of bed nets.
3. The need to eliminate places where mosquitoes can breed around the home
4. The need to be vigilant about the health of children and so to identify symptoms of malaria as soon as possible

Readings:

Gospel options: Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) or Jesus' love for children (Luke 18:16)

Old Testament: Children as a blessing (Ps 127:3) or responsibility to teach children (Prov 13:24)

1. Children are a blessing and a gift from the Lord (Ps 127: 3)ⁱ. We are responsible to care for them and to bring them up to be God-fearing and loving (Deut 6: 4-9)ⁱⁱ; (Prov 22:6)ⁱⁱⁱ.
2. Jesus cared deeply for children (Luke 18 vs 16)^{iv}. At the time of baptism we commit to bringing children up within the Christian faith. We need to ensure that they do not stumble (Luke 17: 1-3)^v
- 3.
4. Our love for them is an expression of God's love through us (John 4:19-21)^{vi}. We need to teach parents responsibility and care for them as a precious gift (Jas 3:1)^{vii}.
5. Our care should be not only for our own children but also the children in our community. Jesus spoke strongly about caring for others in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Children and others in need are those we are called to serve.



6. How do we care for our children? In addition to bringing them up to love God and their neighbours (Mat 22: 36-40)^{viii}, we are to make sure they have food and a loving home, and also ensure they are safe and protected from harm.
7. Jesus said, 'I have come to bring you life, life in abundance' (John 10:10). However, malaria causes suffering and death.
8. Protecting our children requires that we make sure that they are not infected with malaria. This means that they need to be covered by a bed net which is tucked in at night, that our homes and yards are free of places where mosquitoes can breed and that if a child shows signs of malaria, that we seek treatment for them immediately, at least within 24 hours.
9. In this way we are caring for children as Jesus did. We also need to guide children into right living (Proverbs 13:24)^{ix}, which may require ongoing encouragement and guidance as they grow up regarding the importance of using bed nets.

How to present the malaria messages with a focus on healing and treatment:

Aim:

1. To provide a historical perspective on the role of Jesus and the early followers to teach and heal
2. To focus on the way in which Jesus reached out especially to those in need and who were vulnerable in society
3. To challenge individuals to live out their faith in the context of malaria. This will require them to act boldly, to trust in God's power and to use the gifts that God has given them.

Readings:

Extracts from Is 61 and Luke 4: "He sent me to preach..."

Extract from Luke 15: God's care of the seemingly insignificant eg Lost coin, Lost sheep, Prodigal son

Rom 12: 6-8: Gifts for service

Luke 9: 1-2 or Matthew 9: 35-36: The commissioning of the disciples to a ministry of healing and teaching

1. Jesus called his disciples to heal and to care for the community and those around them. The New Testament speaks powerfully many times about healing by Jesus and his followers (Acts 3: 1-9)^x.
2. The healing transformed the lame man's life and resulted in an outpouring of joy and thanksgiving. The twelve disciples were sent out with God's power to both teach and to heal (Luke 9:1-2)^{xi}.
3. Luke shows consistently how Jesus cared for those in need, the vulnerable and for those rejected by society. In Hebrew, these are referred to as the 'anawim'. In the Zacchaeus story these themes are brought together. There are several examples in Luke's gospel of parables reflecting God's care of the



'seemingly insignificant' eg the lost sheep (Luke 15: 1- 7), the lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)^{xii} and the compassionate father (prodigal son) (Luke 15: 11-31).

4. Luke 4:18^{xiii} in telling of Jesus reading of Isaiah 61 in the synagogue, shows the role of Jesus as a preacher, healer, deliverer and comforter. Jesus takes on the role outlined in Isaiah. This is the start of his ministry.
5. Jesus authorizes us as his disciples to show acts of compassion in his name (Mt 9:35-36)^{xiv}. Like the early followers of Jesus, we too are equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit and called as disciples of Jesus to bring health and new life to God's people. God has given us each many gifts which we must use (Rom 12:6-8)^{xv}. Some to be doctors, some teachers, some carers and some preachers. We need to make sure that when people are sick, that they know about and can get the treatment they need.
6. Malaria results in sickness and the loss of life. Illness from malaria can be prevented. We need to take action to prevent malaria. When someone is sick, we need to make sure they get treatment within 24 hours. Treatment protects the person from suffering and death. God uses us as teachers and healers, to ensure that those needing treatment can get it on time. In this way we bring God's love and care to others by being God's healing hands in our community.

How to present malaria messages with a focus on caring for all:

Aim:

1. To raise awareness of the scale and impact of malaria in Sierra Leone and in your area (you may like to give an estimate of the percentage of funerals you have conducted in the past 12 months that were a result of malaria)
2. To highlight that we are part of a community and making malaria faith action a high priority concern, will have an impact on the community
3. To call people to action, whatever their age or status – important to mobilise children and youth and older people

Readings:

Loving my neighbour – what does this mean? (Mark 12, Matt 22 or Luke 10)

Good Samaritan - Luke 10 25-37

1. Jesus offers us life, in abundance (John 10:10), yet in our country we have so many whose lives are cut short by malaria. These especially include those who die due to malaria. One in three children under 5 dies because of malaria.
2. We are called to love, to love God, and to love our neighbours as ourselves (Mark 12; Matt 22; Luke 10). If we obey this commandment, we are loving God.



How to present malaria messages with a focus on death as a result of malaria:

Aim:

1. Without judgement or criticism to use every opportunity to raise concern about the number of people who die as a result of malaria, a preventable disease
2. To use this opportunity of a funeral as a call for all members of the community to watch out for malaria symptoms in others, whoever they are
3. To highlight the range of gifts people have in the community and to challenge people to use their gifts in the malaria faith action programme – this could be comforting those who grieve, clearing places where mosquitoes breed, encouraging and supporting those who are involved in health services/ malaria campaigns etc.

Readings:

Gospel: “ Love one another..” John 13:34-35 or John 11

New Testament: Gifts and service – I Corinthians 12: 4-11)

1. Jesus called us to care for one another (John 13: 34-35)^{xvi}. At this time of grief we need to care for all those who mourn. We mourn the life of the one who has died, but also all those we love who have died. Jesus himself mourned at the death of his friend Lazarus (John 11: 35).
2. Malaria is a disease that causes so much hardship in our community. At the time of Jesus, there were other diseases that caused much suffering, pain and death eg leprosy and fever. Like Jesus mourned, we too mourn the loss of this person.
3. We have been given gifts by God. These gifts include comforting others, caring, teaching about malaria and healing (1 Corinthians 12: 4-11)^{xvii}. Doctors are some of those with the gift of healing. Doctors have developed the medicines to be able to heal people of diseases that can cause death. The medication provides treatment to heal people of malaria. God can heal us, those we love and our communities through medication for malaria.
4. We need to encourage and help those who are ill to get treatment so that they can live full and Godly lives.
5. We can use the talents God has given us to provide healing for others, by telling others about how to prevent and treat malaria.

**Audience:**

Muslim faith community gathered for instruction or prayer, especially the Jumaa prayer.

Purpose:

To teach Muslim families how to prevent infection by malaria by drawing on the strength and wisdom of Allah as revealed in the Holy Qur'an, and the sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh).

First Khutubah

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praises, thanks and glory are due to Allah, Maker and Nourisher of Creation. May His peace and Blessings be upon His servant and Messenger Muhammad, (pbuh) His Household, Companions and those who follow His guidance.


The topic of this khutubah is the malaria, the worst taker of life in our country.

Tell the Jama'at:

- Every life is valuable in the eyes of Allah. "And whoever saves the life of one person, it is as if he saved the life of all mankind" (5.32).

Say that Allah has revealed the basic principles, maqasid, of how we should live, His Shari'ah: three of these great principles of right living are the preservation of life, of lineage, of intellect, three of these great principles of right living. Each one is threatened by the disease of malaria that is caused by the bite of the mosquito.

- Malaria is a killer that preys on the most vulnerable of Allah's creation. It causes more illness and death than any other disease in Sierra Leone. The mosquito carries the disease from an infected person that it bites to another person that it bites who in turn catches the disease. One third of our children who die before they reach the age of five years old will have died because of malaria.
- Malaria is preventable. We can protect our families from it. They do not have to suffer from malaria if we protect them. The Prophet (pbuh) said: "Allah has sent down both the disease and the cure, and he has appointed a cure for every disease, so treat yourself with medicine, but use nothing unlawful".
- The bed-nets that you receive from the government protect your family but you must use them the right way. They have a chemical in them that kills the mosquitoes in your house so the net protects not just your child from being bitten but the whole family. This is lawful. You must hang the net so that no mosquito can fly in. You must tuck the net in around the mat or the bed so no mosquito can fly in. This way you preserve the lives of your family and do not "use your



hands to cause destruction” by allowing in the mosquitoes to bite your child. This way you prevent disease.

Dua’a: O Allah Help us protect our families against infection and death from malaria. Help us prevent the spread of malaria in Sierra Leone by keeping our family free from the disease.

Second Khutubah

Tell the Jama’at:

- You need to learn about the cure for malaria. If your child catches malaria, heed the hadith of the Prophet (pbuh). You must first go to the clinic or the hospital where there is the right medicine. Not aspirin. Not herbs. But powerful medicine that will cure your child of the fever. Do not let the sun set on your child’s fever. Do not delay. Their life is precious to Allah.

“Take treatment for your sickness”, says the Prophet (pbuh).

- Tell the story of famous doctor Harith ibn Kaldah. The Prophet (pbuh) ordered his companions when they were sick to seek medical advice from the most famous doctor of the time. So they had to go and see Harith ibn Kaldah who was not a Muslim. So it does not matter if the doctor or nurse that will cure your child is not a Muslim. Consulting a non-Muslim doctor is lawful and good. The medicine you should find at the clinic that brings health is lawful and good. The Prophet (pbuh) encouraged his companions to go and see a doctor who was not a Muslim so it is important to go quickly to the clinic or the hospital even if the doctors and nurses are not Muslims there.
- We need knowledge (ilm) about malaria and we must use our intellects to protect our families. We can only cure a disease when we know its cause. We need to know that malaria is caused by the bite of a mosquito. This puts the parasite in our body which harms us. We do not get malaria from eating mangoes. The fever comes from the parasite not from a curse. The Prophet (pbuh) said: “God has not created a disease without creating a cure for it, which may be known to some and unknown to others”.
- Mosquitoes carry the disease to us. When we are infected, when our child is very sick, we may recite the verse from the Qur’an about Ayyub (Job) who cried out “verily Satan has touched me with affliction and suffering” (38.41.) Mosquitoes breed in stagnant water. That is why people get fever a lot when the rains come. Cleanliness is very important as a general principle of Islam. The Sunnah of the Prophet insists that “cleanliness is from faith”, and in another hadith the Prophet commanded the Muslims to “clean your courtyards”. That is why Allah tells us in the Qur’an that Ayyub was instructed to wash in clean, cool water. (38.42). So we must work together to remove stagnant water from around our homes. You do not build a home for your enemies. The mosquito bearing malaria to our families is our enemy. Muslims must not be passive in the face of this enemy.



Dua'a: O Allah Help us to learn about the diseases which we suffer from in Sierra Leone so we may prevent them and cure them with Allah's help.

Give us strength to clean our environment and to stop mosquitoes breeding in our villages and towns.

Third & Final Khutubah

Tell the Jama'at:

- Every life is valuable in the eyes of Allah. "And whoever saves the life of one person, it is as if he saved the life of all mankind" (5.32).
- Repeat that Allah has revealed the basic principles, maqasid, of how we should live, His Shari'ah: three of these great principles of right living are `the preservation of life, of lineage, of intellect. Each one is threatened by the disease of malaria that is caused by the bite of the mosquito.
- Malaria is a killer that preys on the most vulnerable of Allah's creation. It causes more illness and death than any other disease in Sierra Leone. The mosquito carries the disease from an infected person that it has bitten to another person that it bites and who, in turn, catches the disease. Amongst the most vulnerable is a pregnant woman.

"so when he covers her she bears a light burden, then moves about with it; but when it grows heavy, they both call upon Allah, their Lord: If thou givest us a good one, we shall certainly be of the grateful ones". (7.189)

- The gift of life is precious. It is one of Allah's greatest gifts. So we give thanks to Allah. But the way we show our thanks to Allah is to protect this gift. We must protect the health of the mother and child while the baby is still developing in the womb. In her pregnancy a woman is more vulnerable to malaria. It can kill her and thus the child, cause her to miscarry or to deliver a premature or malnourished baby. So she must go to the clinic or hospital to prevent this happening. There she will get medicine that will protect her from the disease.
- Men, the bed-nets that you receive from the government protect your pregnant wife and the baby in her womb but you must use the bed-nets the right way. They have a chemical in them that kills the mosquitoes in your house so the net protects not just your wife from being bitten but the whole family. This is lawful. You must hang the net so that no mosquito can fly in. You must tuck the net in around the mat or the bed so no mosquito can fly in. This way you preserve the lives of your family and do not "use your hands to cause destruction" by allowing in the mosquitoes to bite you. This way you prevent disease.
- You, the fathers, must make sure your wives goes to the clinic to get the medicine when they are with child. You must accompany them if you can and support them.



“And (as for) the believing men and the believing women, they are guardians of each other; they enjoin good and forbid evil” 9.71

- Allah is aware when we are good to our family and protect them as we should. He knows when we spend money to provide for our family and those around us in our community. Protecting our families from mosquitoes is one of the most important things we can do because we are saving their lives. As those with the knowledge of what is good, teaching other people to do the same is our duty.

“They ask you as to what they should spend. Say: Whatever wealth you spend, it is for the parents and the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the traveller, and whatever good you do, Allah surely knows it” (2.215)

- As Muslims we must care for the sick. In Sierra Leone many of the sick are suffering from malaria.

And the Prophet (pbuh) said: “On the day of Judgement, Allah will announce: O son of Adam, I was sick yet you did not visit me. He will reply, ‘O Allah, how could I have visited You since you are the Lord of the worlds? Allah will say: Did you not know that My servant so and so was sick, yet you did not visit him? Should you have visited him you would have found Me with him”.

Dua’a:

O Allah Help us to follow your commands and walk on your Way. Help us to be merciful and compassionate in our families and in our communities, to prevent illness, preserve life and to care for the sick.



ⁱ Children are a gift from the Lord; they are a real blessing.

ⁱⁱ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.⁵ Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.⁷ Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

ⁱⁱⁱ Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it.

^{iv} Jesus called the children to him and said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these”.

^v ¹ Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come.² It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.³ So watch yourselves.

^{vi} We love because he first loved us.²⁰ Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen.²¹ And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

^{vii} ¹ Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.

^{viii} ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”³⁷ Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.³⁹ And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

^{ix} Love your children by disciplining them

^x In response to the beggar at the Beautiful Gate’s request for money,Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”⁷ Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong.⁸ He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

^{xi} ¹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

^{xii} ⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins^[a] and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbours together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

^{xiii} ¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free,

^{xiv} ³⁵ Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

^{xv} ⁶ We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith;⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach;⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,^[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

^{xvi} ³⁴ “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

^{xvii} ⁴ There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them.⁵ There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.⁶ There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

⁷ Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good.⁸ To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit,⁹ to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit,¹⁰ to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,^[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.^[b]¹¹ All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.