



Have a Mercy Ships

Skill Sunday

Celebrate the skills and talents in your church and inspire your congregation to use their gifts in mission

Dear Church Leader,

Do you ever wonder what skills and talents are hidden in your church?

By holding a *Skill Sunday* service you will be inspiring everyone to recognise and thank God for their gifts.

What's more, a *Skill Sunday* encourages church members to use their talents to serve – whether at church, in the workplace or in the mission field.

It's also a great way to remember that 'mission' happens on a Monday, while we're at school, at work, at the supermarket or helping others in our communities.

Everyone has a skill they can use to serve God.

No one knows this better than our volunteer team at Mercy Ships. Every year hundreds of Christians from many walks of life use their skills and talents to serve God by bringing hope and healing to some of the poorest people in the world.

In this brochure, you will find some suggested songs, prayers, sermon ideas and stories that you could be using to inspire your congregation to serve.

As an added bonus...

Why not take a church family photo, with everyone wearing their Monday clothes.

This will look great on your webpage and social media feeds.



Darren Richards
Director of Engagement

Inspire your church!

To hold a *Skill Sunday* service:

1 Pick a Sunday when you want to hold your service, just show the video and choose some of the *Skill Sunday* resources.

Visit mercyships.org.uk/church to find the *Skill Sunday* video.

2 Ask everyone to come to church on *Skill Sunday* wearing their 'Monday clothes' whatever they normally wear at work, at school or out and about. A bit like a non-uniform day, but the other way around!

3 Invite a few church members to share on *Skill Sunday* – to explain how they use their gifts and abilities to serve God, both at church and during the week.

4 Take a special offering on *Skill Sunday* for the world's poorest and the work of Mercy Ships.

Remember to add the hashtags **#SkillSunday #MercySunday** when you share your photos on social media



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Bible Reading Options

Matthew 25:35-40

Serving Jesus as we serve poor

Matthew 5:14-16

Shine with your good deeds and bring God glory

1 Corinthians 12:4-28

Using our spiritual gifts and unity in the body of Christ

Colossians 3:23-24

Whatever you do, work heartily as for the Lord

1 Peter 4:10-11

Use your gifts to serve others

Ephesians 2:10

We are God's workmanship, He has prepared good works for us

Worship Song Options

The Servant King

Graham Kendrick

I Will Follow

Chris Tomlin

Build This House

Lou Fellingham

Let Everything That Has Breath

Matt Redman

Here I Am To Worship

Tim Hughes

God Of Justice

Tim Hughes

May The Words Of My Mouth

Tim Hughes

Be Thou My Vision

Traditional

A prayer of invitation

Let us take a few moments to remind ourselves that the Lord God who made heaven and earth also created each of us in His image and He crowned each of us with glory and honour.

We are His people, the work of His hands.
He is our God who provides for us,
who gives us talents and skills to use in His service
who holds each of us in the palm of His hands.

In the name of God our Father
In the name of Jesus our Redeemer
and to the Holy Spirit who inspires us to life and holiness
all honour and glory are yours now and forever.
Amen.

Prayers of thanksgiving

Our Generous God,
We give thanks to you for the gifts you have given us,
our lives, our families and our friends.
We thank you for the talents and skills you have given to each one of us.
All that we have comes from you O Lord.
Help us to count our blessings and to rejoice in your goodness.

Walk with us, our God.
Help us in our spiritual journeys so that we can grow in our relationship with you
and show mercy and love to others.

Renew us in your Spirit.
Give us strength and courage to use our skills and talents in our workplaces,
local communities, schools and families – wherever you call us to go in your name.
Amen.

Prayers

A prayer for Mercy Ships volunteers

Father God,
Thank you for giving each of us different gifts to serve one another on Sunday
and also to share your love and mercy with people on Monday and all week long.

Thank you that you have prepared good works for us to do, because we are all your
handiwork. Please help us to use the gifts you have given us for mission.

Today, we lift up the volunteers who are using their skills and talents with Mercy
Ships. Please be with them and be with their patients too.
Amen.

A closing prayer

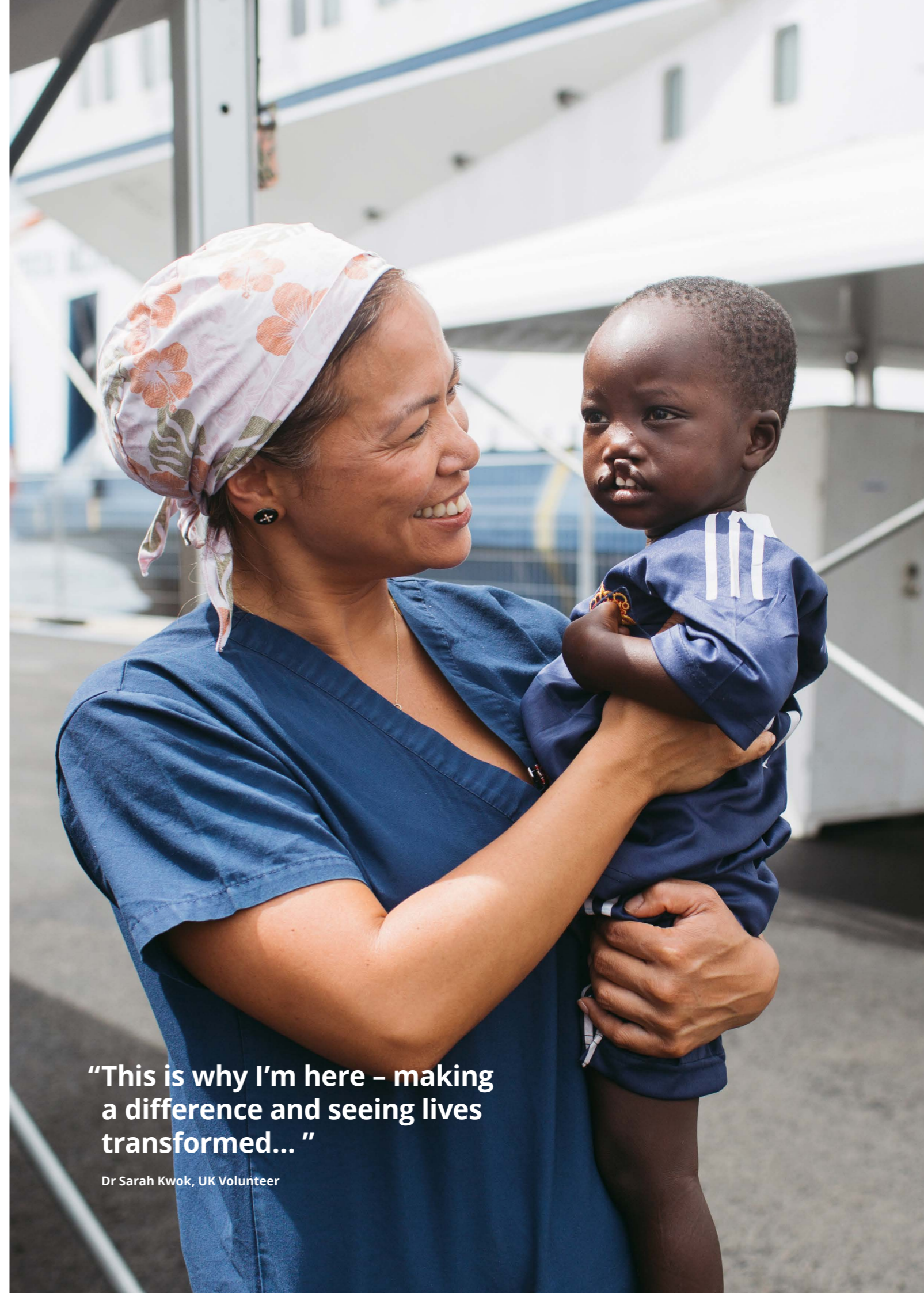
O Lord of all gifts,
You taught us how to live and to love.
You taught us how to serve one another,
not counting the cost but being available to all.

We pray that you will make us a generous people that willingly give of their
time, skills and treasure to build up your kingdom here on earth.

Take our feet where they need to go,
give us hands that readily reach out to others,
give us ears to hear the silent cries of those who are suffering,
give us eyes to see their needs and merciful hearts to reach out to them.

May we share about you Lord God with others near and far.
Use us in your service we pray.
We ask this in humility and gratitude.
Amen.

Prayers



**“This is why I’m here – making
a difference and seeing lives
transformed...”**

Dr Sarah Kwok, UK Volunteer

Sermon Notes

Do you know what you are really good at? What do you relish doing? Are you a dab hand at decorating? Highly capable at caring for others? Top-notch at offering hospitality to those who are alone? Are you a computer whizz? Do you love teaching or maybe counselling? Or maybe you are a clever cook or a nurturing nurse?

Whatever talents and skills you have – they are God's gift to you.

In **Matthew 25**, Jesus tells the parable of the talents, where faithful stewards who invest and use what they have been given are rewarded with more to invest and to use in His service. Immediately after this story, Jesus begins to teach about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, welcoming the stranger and looking after the sick. Perhaps the two are connected?

Ephesians 2:10 adds that we are God's workmanship – His masterpiece (in some translations) – and that God has prepared good works for us to do, for His glory!

You are unique in God's sight – you are a masterpiece! And He has blessed you with unique strengths and skills that you can invest into the lives of others, especially those who are in need.

Jesus even goes so far as to say that when we serve the 'least' in our world, we're doing it for Him!

Matthew 25:37-40 says: "Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?'"

"The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'"

Colossians 3:23-24 echoes this truth - when we serve God with our skills in our everyday lives, we're working FOR the Lord...

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving."

When we serve God with our individually given abilities, whether 'at work', at home or at church, we are called to do so as if 'working for the Lord', and reminded that God will see and reward us.

As it says in **Matthew 25:23**, God longs to say to us, as it says in this parable...

"Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

How does God want us to use our talents for Him?

1 Peter 4:10 says: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms."

God wants us to use our everyday talents and gifts for the benefit of others.

In fact, **1 Corinthians 12:4-28** reminds us that we all have a role to play, just as different parts of the human body each have an important role.

As the body of Christ, God asks each of us to use our gifts to fulfil our role in His Church body, to bless others and also to further His mission and kingdom here in (your town) and further afield, around the world.



Could you use your talents and skills to bless people here in our church? By joining one of our Sunday teams or midweek ministries?

Maybe there's a ministry like Mercy Ships that would benefit from your skills or talents, in order to help others – Mercy Ships need volunteers in the UK, to speak about the ministry locally, as well as onboard their ships in a variety of roles, from teachers and administrators, to electricians and cooks.

Is there someone God has placed on your heart, closer to home, for whom you can be a blessing with your gifts and abilities?

If you love baking, maybe you can bless a lonely neighbour with a nice cake and a conversation. Or perhaps you can babysit for free for a single mother who needs some time for herself or for a carer who is looking after a disabled relative.

Whatever talents and skills God has given you – you can find a way to use those skills to benefit others! You can 'invest' your talent in the lives of those less fortunate.

So, here is my challenge for you today ... go home today and pray about how you are going to use your talents and skills to serve and bless others, to give glory to God. Not as a duty or chore, but as a response to God's grace and love in your life.

In **Matthew 5:14-16** Jesus says: "You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven."

Don't hide your light and skills... shine and serve, and bring God glory!

Changed lives Stories and Testimonies

On the Mercy Ships website you'll find lots of inspiring and powerful stories and illustrations - of patients as well as volunteers from UK churches, who use their gifts to serve the poor onboard our hospital ships.

Watch and read some of the testimonies and inspirational patient stories online:

[www.mercyships.org.uk/
who-we-serve/patient-stories/](http://www.mercyships.org.uk/who-we-serve/patient-stories/)

Fanta's *story*

Fanta (pictured) is a nurse from Cameroon. For 10 years she worked with a 10lb tumour growing under her right arm. Despite her long career as a nurse, Fanta did not have access to safe surgery and was afraid to try and have the tumour removed. So for 10 years she hid the tumour under draped shawls..

"How can I expect people to respect me as a nurse and not be scared themselves when I am too afraid to do anything about my own problem?" asked Fanta, whose melon-sized tumour made it difficult to wear the nursing uniform she'd dreamed of wearing since a young girl.

"My colleagues told me I would die if I tried to have it removed or if I left it too long," she said.

But Mercy Ships, who operate the world's largest charity hospital ship, gave Fanta the hope she needed to overcome her fear.

"The nurses at the ship were so compassionate and loving. They kept reassuring me that everything was going to be more than OK, and something in me trusted them," she said.

Mercy Ships volunteers removed Fanta's tumour free of charge, radically changing her life and giving her the confidence she'd been lacking for so long.

"I can now lift my arms with ease! I will be able to dress like the other ladies at my hospital. My husband has already bought me some new fabric so I can make more dresses that show off my arms!"



Join the volunteer crew – from cooks and engineers, to nurses and teachers!

Many Christian professionals have stepped out of their comfort zone to use their talents and skills to follow Jesus and bless the world's poorest. You could be one of them...

#BeaHero

www.mercyships.org.uk/beahero



Meet James, AV Technician

"As an AV tech, I help things in the operating room flow more smoothly."

Meet Ian, Baker

"I was surprised that my skills were needed, I thought that everyone knows how to bake! Throughout my career I had been chasing accolades, but I found my identity through serving with Mercy Ships."

Meet Kathryn, Primary School Teacher

"I did not think that I could volunteer because I was not medical, but then I discovered that they have a school onboard and needed teachers," said Kathryn Dungworth from Lancashire.

Many of the volunteers move onboard with their families, and whilst the parents serve in the different departments on the ship, Kathryn is one of the teachers who provide a world-class education for their children.

"It is a unique experience, and it is fabulous being able to serve alongside the families onboard, being able to share experiences with them that can have a positive impact on their learning," said Kathryn. "There is a real sense of community, we're all working together to serve a greater purpose: bringing hope and healing."

Also loving and serving others in all that you do, however big or small!"

The volunteers onboard come from all over the globe, over 40 nations. Meaning that Kathryn's classroom, despite being small, is truly international.

Kathryn has always had a love for travelling, which made volunteering for Mercy Ships all the more appealing. *"I love to spend time with friends doing lots of different, fun things in many different places. I love to explore and find out about different places and the history behind them. I also enjoy making new friends from around the world."*

"Loving and serving others in all that you do, however big or small, is a wonderful way to show God's love to those around you. I would absolutely encourage people to volunteer with Mercy Ships, it is a wonderful way to use the gifts that God has given to you in a way that can help to bring hope, joy, love and healing to others."

The difference your church's offering can make

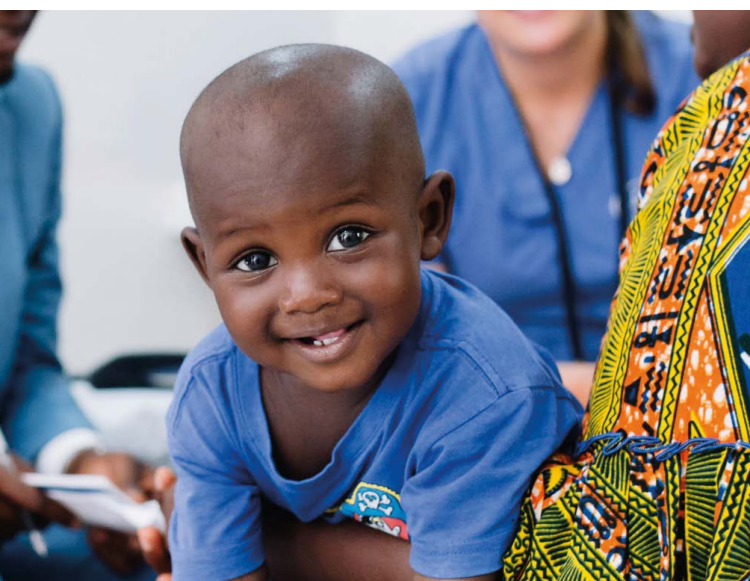
In the UK, if you fall ill or need surgery, we have ambulances, doctors and hospitals to provide world-class medical care and surgery.

But in sub-Saharan Africa, 9 out of 10 people do not have access to the medical care and surgery when they need it...

This is why Mercy Ships volunteers use their talents and skills to follow the 2000-year-old model of Jesus, bringing hope and healing to the poor. Serving in over 200 different roles, they each contribute to providing free surgery: letting the blind see, the lame walk, and the outcast return home ...just as Christ did.

Please show the Mercy Ships story video and take an offering for Mercy Ships on Skill Sunday or send a contribution from your church's Overseas or Mission fund.

churches@mercyships.org.uk
01438 727800



Here are some of the things your church's generosity can make possible:

A gift of £150

can support a local nurse's training onboard the Africa Mercy or at our Hope Centre outpatient facility. Your church's gift will ensure that our good work continues and more lives are saved in that country long after the ship has gone.

A gift of £300

can help provide a week's supply of hygiene and sanitation products like gloves, gowns, bed sheets, and antiseptic cleaners. Your church's gift can ensure that every surgery is successful and a patient's recovery is not affected by infections and problems.

A gift of £500

can enable a patient with a deformity or life-threatening tumour to receive a free life-changing surgery.

A gift of £750

can help restore a woman's sense of dignity. The surgery for an obstetric fistula patient will change her life. Your church's gift can enable a patient's surgery, an extended recovery stay, the gift of a Bible and a beautiful celebration dress – all these things can help restore her confidence and hope as well.

A gift of £1,000

can fund one of our operating rooms for a day. Keeping an operating room running smoothly is critical to saving lives.

Thank you so much for your generosity and your kindness.

What others say

"The vision of Mercy Ships is Jesus-shaped mission and ministry in action. It is the call of every Christian to assist in Christ's work of healing the sick, helping the lame to walk, and restoring sight to the blind."

The Most Rev'd Justin Welby, *Archbishop of Canterbury*



"Mercy Ships really looked after our church member. He has come back home with a greater heart and passion to get involved with our church ministry to the poor locally."

Rev'd Ramzi Adcock, *Chair of the World Mission Committee, Jesmond Parish Church*



"Mercy Ships are unique. In countries that could not imagine the benefits of the NHS, Mercy Ships offer totally life-changing treatment and new hope. It's something the entire church can get behind by praying, giving or even going. What a wonderful opportunity to be a part of God changing lives through His people."

Cathy Madavan, *Speaker and Author of Digging for Diamonds*



"Every now and then God drops into the heart of one of His followers a vision and a dream that is so close to His heart for the poor and the broken that it can't help but become a reality. Mercy Ships is one such ministry."

Roy Crowne, *Executive Director, Hope Together*



"To care for the poor, to visit the sick, these are the basics. Mercy Ships gives us an exciting opportunity to partner with them and do just that."

Lou Fellingham, *Worship Leader & Songwriter*



"I believe when you are given a gift, you are meant to share it."

Dr Odry Agbessi, *Benin's first reconstructive burns surgeon. Over 40,000 medical professionals have been trained by Mercy Ships across Africa*



The blind see, the lame walk and outcasts regain dignity



For Children and Young People

You can download our children's worksheets and youth resources here:

www.mercyships.org.uk/get-involved/activity-packs/

Why not show children and young people a Mercy Ships video or tell them a story and encourage them to come to church on Mercy Ships Skill Sunday wearing their Monday clothes - ask them to take on a sponsored activity, where friends, parents and grandparents can sponsor them. Then they can bring their sponsorship to church on Skill Sunday, to help Mercy Ships save a child's or a young person's life.

Visit our website for lots of ideas for fundraising events and activities.

mercyships.org.uk

#SkillSunday #MercySunday

Follow us on social media [/mercyshipsuk](#)

