LOVE IN ACTION
[Marla and Plasmo enter to buzzing sound, Marla looks sad, Plasmo pleased]

**Leader:** Hey, Marla, why so glum? Aren’t you having a good time at Vacation Bible School?

**Marla:** I’ve been having a great time! And I’ve learned so much. All about Jesus and how he loves us. And how we can show Christ’s love by working together. I learned about how malaria says STOP, but Jesus says GO. And how we have family all over the world. I learned about how each of us has special gifts and when we share our gifts we can do great things.

**Leader:** That sounds like a lot of learning. So why are you still sad?

**Marla:** Well, it’s just, Plasmo’s still here. I thought if I learned all this stuff and did all this stuff then he would just magically go away.

**Leader:** Ah, I see. Yes, malaria is a big problem, and it doesn’t just go away all of a sudden. But even if we cannot just snap our fingers and make malaria history, that doesn’t mean that the work that we do doesn’t make a huge difference right now.

**Marla:** Really, like what?

**Leader:** Remember the story people you made at craft time on the second day? Those were all real children with real stories whose lives have been made better. Every dollar we raise is another dollar making a direct difference in someone’s life. And every person we tell about the campaign is one more person who can join us.

**Marla:** But a dollar is just a dollar, I still don’t see how this helps.

**Leader:** It doesn’t take a lot of money to make a difference. Just $1 can buy a malaria test, to find out if a sick person has malaria. And $2 can provide life-saving medicine; $10 can buy a bed net. Every gift, big or little, makes a difference. And Jesus sees everything we do equally. In Jesus’ eyes, every gift is the most important gift of all, because it’s the one that we give. I know it can be discouraging to wait, but I promise you that all of this makes a huge difference for our sisters and brothers in Africa. And one day, if we all keep working together and helping each other, we really can make malaria history! And Plasmo will be gone forever.

**Marla:** Thanks for the encouragement; I feel a lot better. And Plasmo even seems to be feeling a little bit scared with all this talk about all of the ways to put our love into action! I can’t wait to see what else we learn today! [Marla and Plasmo exit]
LESSON FOCUS:
Every gift is a blessing to God. How can we share all the things we’ve learned this week with the world?

MEMORY VERSE:
1 John 3:18 “Little children, let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”

GATHER:
Write down the Bible Memory Verse and post it in a visible location in the room. As the children come in, invite them to sit in a circle. Welcome them and invite them to share what they remember of today’s memory verse. Affirm all answers, then direct their attention to the sign and have everyone read it together.

Spend some time reflecting on the things they’ve learned this week. What was new for them? What was surprising? What makes them hopeful?

OPEN THE BIBLE:
Marla has been struggling all week with feeling small, like she doesn’t have very much to offer. Today I want to share a story with you about someone else who didn’t seem to have very much to offer to God. Read Luke 21:1-4.

The widow put in much less than the rich people, but what did Jesus say about the widow’s gift? That it was worth more because she had less.

What does this tell us about what Jesus thinks of what we have to offer? Jesus cares more about the thought behind what we give than the size of the gift. It is more important to give openly.

Talk about some little gifts that make a big difference. A smile or a hug can make someone’s whole day brighter. Helping a little brother or sister with homework could help them for their future. One dollar can buy a malaria test, two dollars can buy life-saving medication for a child with malaria and $10 can buy a mosquito net that would help prevent them from getting malaria in the first place.
APPLY THE SCRIPTURE:

One gift children can give is to share everything they’ve learned this week. Help the children come up with a creative way to share their knowledge with the congregation. Have them work together to create a skit or a poster that teaches everything they’ve learned about the ELCA Malaria Campaign and how it makes a difference in the world. Have the children share their skits during the closing worship service or at a Sunday worship service. Hang the posters in the narthex or fellowship hall. Encourage parents who come to the closing service and congregation members on Sunday to pay attention to the skits or posters and ask the children questions about everything they learned and did.

Alternate: For older children, create an action plan for how they want to continue to support the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign throughout the rest of the year. Maybe they can plan to have their congregation take part in World Malaria Sunday in April or host an Infestation fundraiser. The Congregation Action Kit (available at www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources) has great suggestions for how they can get started.

SEND:

Invite the children to sit back down in a circle. Lead a brief review. What was the memory verse? What did they learn about today? What did they learn about this week? How do they see Jesus working in their lives? In their congregation? In the world?

CLOSING PRAYER:

Dear Jesus, we give you thanks for all the amazing ways you are at work in the world. Thank you for using us, our hands, our hearts, our lives to support our sisters and brothers all over the globe. And thank you for the ways in which our sisters and brothers teach us more about you. Amen.
GATHER:
Invite the children to reflect on everything they’ve learned and done this week. Use this last session together to reinforce learning and help them think about how to take everything they’ve learned and share it.

ACTIVITIES

MALARIA JUNIOR JEOPARDY
Use this fun Jeopardy-style game to review everything the group has learned this week. Download the game at www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources (game requires Microsoft PowerPoint). Using a laptop and projector, project the game on a blank wall or use an old sheet to create a screen. Or create your own game surface using sheets of colored paper taped to a wall. Divide the group into teams and have fun prizes for everyone.

SHARE YOUR GIFTS
If the class did not do the “Applying the Scripture” activity during Bible study or if they need more time, this is a great time to work on it. Have the students create a poster or skit to share everything they learned this week about malaria, the work of the ELCA Malaria Campaign, and how they can get involved. Older children can create a plan to continue supporting the campaign into the future. Use the Congregation Action Kit (available at www.ELCA.org/malaria/resources) for some ideas on how to get started.

CRAFTS

MALARIA FUND JARS

Materials Needed:
- Assorted empty (clean) jars; mason jars work well
- Blank paper cut into strips to fit the jars
- Glue
- Markers, pens, glitter, stickers, etc.
- Pennies

Instructions:
Decorate the strips of paper with themes about the ELCA Malaria Campaign. Glue the strips of paper to the jars or tie ribbons or decorate with stickers. Give each child two pennies to start their ELCA Malaria Campaign fund. Send the jars home with the children or use them in worship for people to collect change in support of the ELCA Malaria Campaign.
SNACK AND STORY

SNACK: Love your neighbor cookies

Ingredients:
- Heart cookie cutter
- Sugar cookie dough or premade sugar cookies
- Frosting
- Sprinkles, red hot candies, etc.

Directions:
Have children decorate heart-shaped cookies. But instead of decorating their own cookie, each child is to make a cookie for their neighbor. Give them a few minutes to talk first, so that they have a chance to share what they like and do not like. Encourage the children to try and make the best possible cookie for their neighbor.

INFESTATION

Materials Needed:
- Reproducible mosquito template (see the Helpful Handouts section)
- Markers

Instructions:
One simple fundraising idea that has worked well is to host a mosquito infestation. Before you begin, pick a fundraising goal, taking into account the time frame and size of your congregation. You could do this on the Sunday after vacation Bible school or for a period of time in the future. Share the goal with the children.

Using the template, photocopy as many mosquitoes as you need to reach your goal. Have the children decorate them.

Hang the mosquitoes in the sanctuary, narthex, fellowship hall or anywhere they will draw attention. Invite members of the congregation to purchase the mosquitoes for $1, $2, $5, etc., with the money going toward the congregational goal.
STORY: Little Things Make Big Differences

Leader’s Guide for reading “Little Things Make Big Differences”

INTRODUCTION:
This book introduces us to Rehema, who lives with her brother, Agape, and her parents in a village in Tanzania. When she was a baby, Rehema got malaria. Now she loves to hear her parents tell the story of how she survived. The story teaches us a lot about mosquitoes and malaria, and about how children in the United States can get involved in the fight against malaria in Africa.

Please note: This story was written by John and Monique Nunes; John is the past President and CEO of Lutheran World Relief. “Little Things Make Big Differences” was written to help promote the efforts of the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, which is a malaria campaign of Lutheran World Relief and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Lutheran Malaria Initiative is separate from the ELCA Malaria Campaign, but we are working together in Tanzania, where this story takes place! The Lutheran malaria program in Tanzania is being implemented by Lutheran World Relief and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania. The ELCA Malaria Campaign is supporting the malaria work in Tanzania with gifts totaling $750,000.

You can learn more about the two campaigns by visiting their websites:
• ELCA Malaria Campaign: www.ELCA.org/malaria
• Lutheran Malaria Initiative: www.lutheranmalaria.org

DISCUSSION:
• Where do Rehema and her family live? (Find Tanzania on the map.)
• What is it like there? (Tanzania has tall mountains and beaches and warm weather and lots of animals that we see in the zoo.)
• Explore commonalities. (Family life, food, playing with friends, going to the doctor when you’re sick, parents who take care of you, etc.)
• Explore differences: how is Rehema’s life different from yours? (Her mommy is a farmer and my mommy works in an office, they had to walk to the doctor and we drive in the car, she lives in a place where mosquito bites are more dangerous, etc.)
• What happened when Rehema got malaria when she was a baby? (Her parents carried her to the clinic, the doctor gave her medicine and taught her family about malaria.)
• How can children in Africa stay safe from malaria? (Sleep under a mosquito net, clear away areas of standing water, go to the doctor right away when they feel sick.)
• How can we help our friends in Africa take care of their families and keep them safe? (Pray for our sisters and brothers in Africa, raise money for the ELCA Malaria Campaign, teach others about malaria.)