

Sermon Ideas

Clergy have their own unique way of sermon preparation and delivery. With that understanding and appreciation, the following suggestions are given as ideas.

John 11:25- I am the resurrection and the life.

I Corinthians 15:35-58 – The spiritual body.

These texts could be used to teach about the resurrection, emphasizing that the physical body is transformed into a spiritual body, therefore the gift of organ and tissue donation does not affect the ability of one to be resurrected.

Luke 6:31-38- Give to others and God will give to you. This text could be explored as the command to give to others and the various ways that we can give, including the giving of our organs and tissues through donation.

Romans 8:28-29- Seeking the good. This scripture could be used to show that in the midst of tragic circumstances of sudden death, God seeks to find good with us. Donation may be one sign of good in an otherwise senseless death.

John 3:16-17- God gave His Son. God gave his son so that we might live in eternal life. We can give our organs and tissues when we no longer have need of them so that others may live in this temporary world.

Luke 14:12-14- Giving without reward. In this scripture, we are told to give to those who are in need without thought of reward from them. The need for organ and tissue donation is great.

Genesis 2:26-31- Responsible power. In the moment of our creation, we were given power over all things. Responsible use of power includes using our bodies to give life.

Pope Benedict XVI's Message on Organ Donation

“To donate one’s organs is an act of love that is morally licit as long as it is free and spontaneous. To be an organ donor means to carry out an act of love toward someone in need, toward a brother in difficulty. It is a free act of love, of availability, that every person of good will can do at any time and for any brother. As for myself, I have agreed to give my organs to whomever might be in need.”

What Clergy Can Do!

An informed clergy can assist parishioners with facts and options about organ and tissue donation.

Education/ Community-Outreach Programs

- Place an article in the church bulletin or newsletter about organ donation.
- Conduct an organ-donation presentation for parishioners.
- Include education about organ and tissue donation as an objective for your health ministry.
- Hold an organ-donor day and have parishioners sign organ-donor cards.
- Preach a sermon on organ donation.
- Recognize families of organ and tissue donors and transplant recipients in your own congregation.
- Remember organ donors and donor families with candlelight vigils or other remembrances.

Suggested Copy for Church Newsletters or Bulletins

The following copy could be inserted in your church newsletter or bulletin to support National Donor Sabbath and remind your church family of the importance of organ and tissue donation.

Places of worship throughout Northern California will celebrate National Donor Sabbath this year from Friday, November 13 through Sunday, November 15 to raise awareness around the critical need for organ and tissue donors. More than 100,000 men, women and children are waiting for a healthy organ.

In Northern California alone, more than 10,000 people await life-saving organs and thousands more await tissue transplants that can dramatically improve their

quality of life. Today, 18 people will die because they will not get the organ transplant they so desperately need.

We encourage members of your congregation to consider organ and tissue donation. Talk it over with your family members to discuss your wishes, and sign up at www.donateLIFEcalifornia.org. If you have questions, call the California Transplant Donor Network at 800-245-4808 x7010 for a free brochure on organ and tissue donation or visit their Web site, www.ctdn.org.

Suggested Hymns

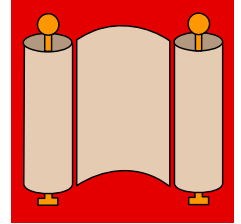
The following list of hymns is a start in your efforts to locate appropriate hymns from your own religious tradition that bring the message of hope and giving that organ and tissue donation and transplantation provide.

I'll Praise My Maker While I've Breath
Jesus, United By Thy Grace
Amazing Grace
Lift Up Our Hearts, O King of Kings
Heavenly Father, Bless Me Now
O Son of Man, Thou Modest Known
Come, Sinners, To The Gospel Feast
The Voice of God is Calling
Jesus, Love of my Soul
O Thou Who Art the Shepard
Have Thine Own Way, Lord
Open My Eyes, That I May See
Immortal Love, Forever Full
Blest Be The Tie That Binds
Take My Life and Let It Be Consecrated
Jesus, Lord We Look to Thee
O Young and Fearless Prophet
O God, Whose Will Is Life
We Give Thee But Thine Own
What Wondrous Love Is This
Lord, Whose Love Through Humble Service
Hope Of The World

You can give the gift of life through organ and tissue donation. Scripture tells us that "whatever you do for the least of my brethren, you do unto me." Organ and tissue donation is one of the greatest gifts you can give or receive.

SACRED TEXTS THAT CAN BE USED WITH ORGAN AND TISSUE DONATION

Transplants are not specifically mentioned in most sacred texts because they are a very recent development. The timeless content of the texts speak to donation in principle. The following references can guide our thinking and actions on organ and tissue donation.



Hebrew Bible

Genesis 2:20-30 Bone transplant: A rib taken from Adam to give life to Eve

Leviticus 1:7 "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."

Deuteronomy 30:15-20 "Choose life so that you and your descendants may live."

Psalms 8 "How majestic is your name in all the earth!"

Psalms 41 Images of a healing Lord

Psalms 100 Psalm of praise and thanksgiving

Psalms 107 "Consider the steadfast love of the Lord."

Psalms 111 "I give thanks to the Lord."

Psalms 113 Praises to the Lord

Psalms 116 "O Lord, I pray, save my life!"

Psalms 145 "The Lord is gracious and merciful."

Psalms 147 "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving."

Ecclesiastes 3:1-17 "For everything there is a season. . ."

Isaiah 35:1-6 “Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.”

“. . . the eyes of the blind shall be opened.”

Isaiah 40:31 “But those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength. . . they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.”

Ezekiel 37 The valley of dry bones: “These bones shall live.”

New Testament

Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful.”

Matthew 7:7 “Ask . . . seek. . . knock.”

Matthew 7:12 “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you. . .”

Matthew 25: 31-46 Caring for the stranger

Luke 4:16-21 “. . . recovery of sight to the blind.”

Luke 6:37-38 “Give and it will be given to you.”

John 3:16-17 “God so loved the world that He gave . . .”

John 10:10 “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

John 15:12-17 “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

II Corinthians 9:6-8 “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

1 John 4:11 “Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another.”

Revelation 21:4-5 In eternity we will not need our earthly bodies: “Former things will pass away, all things will be made new.”

Zen Buddhist Sacred Texts

(The following was sent by Reverend Madeline Ko-i Bastis, a Zen Buddhist from the Peaceful Dwelling Project in East Hampton, New York.)

“Zen Buddhists do not generally rely on text references. However, the ‘Jataka Tales’ are ancient stories/myths/accounts (depending on the branch of Buddhism) which set down the Buddha’s purification journey through many lifetimes leading to his incarnation as Shakyamuni and his enlightenment. Selflessness and generosity are the hallmarks of these stories and it is within these tales that can be found many references which are applicable to organ donation, including the story of the tigress, upon which I based my message. There may be suitable references in the ‘Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha,’ but . . . these are more important to those practicing the Theravadan branch of Buddhism.”

From the Jewish Rabbinical Assembly

“It is not merely permissible for a Jew to bequeath his organs for transplantation following his death, it is a Mitzvah for him to do so, in order to save one life, or several lives.”

Rabbi David Golinkin
Law Committee Chairman
Rabbinical Assembly of Israel:
Dean, Seminary of Jewish Studies,
Jerusalem