

WHY? A Resource Kit for Talking to Teens about Disaster, Relief, & Restoration

Blessed are the Hands

By Rev. Terry K. Dittmer

Core Text: Proverbs 31:20

Core Visual/Illustration:

<http://www.digitaljournalist.org/issue0509/gay06.html>

On September 3, 2005, Eric Gay, a photographer for the Associated Press, took a picture of Tanisha Blevin, (age 5) holding the hand of Nita LaGarde, (age 105) as they are evacuated from the Convention Center in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. The picture was published in newspapers across the country on Sunday, September 4. The picture is particularly striking as charges of racism and discrimination ran rampant in the aftermath of the storm.

Questions/Discussion Starters for Youth:

1. Look at the picture and study the images. Who is helping whom? Who is caring for whom? Is there more than one answer?
2. How is each person blessed or encouraged by the other?
3. How is each person the personification of Proverbs 31:20? What about Isaiah 35:3-4?
4. What might each person mean to the other?
5. Look at Jesus' words in Matthew 22:34-40. Reflect on what you have read.
6. The two, Tanisha and Nita, young and old, perhaps rich and poor, black and white, are both victims of the storm yet stand together as expressions of hope, comfort, and a kind of gentle justice as they care for each other. In the midst of the suffering, what gift(s) did God give to each through each other? Apply to the storms and injustices in your own life or lives of your friends. How does this photo give you hope?
7. Why is this picture, together with Jesus' words so powerful?
8. Conclusion: A follow-up on Tanisha and Nita found that they were doing well, having been evacuated to Houston. With Tanisha's grandmother, they lived together and continued to care for each other in Houston until Nita's death from cancer in 2009. Close in prayer, each person taking the hands of those next to them.