

Creative Alabaster Containers

One of the fascinating aspects about working in the NMI Office is that one has opportunities to “see” how missions is “done” globally.

Alabaster often provides many opportunities for creativity. Purchasing Alabaster boxes is not cost-effective to most places outside the USA/Canada Region; however, NMI leaders around the world understand the value of having something for collecting Alabaster funds.

Check out a few photos of Alabaster Offering containers that people from all over the world have sent to us.

Mexico—A creative person found heart-shaped plastic boxes, cut a hole in the top, and made a label to wrap around it that announces it is for the Alabaster Offering and also has a border explaining what the money is used for. They distributed the boxes to their congregation. (Tabita Gonzalez, Stewardship Ministries)



India—The painted one is made out of clay, sold inexpensively by street vendors. I understand sometimes the youth paint and decorate them as they choose. On Alabaster Offering day, the jars are broken in the service for the coins to be given (the only opening is the slit in the top, so they have to be broken to get to the valuables inside—kind of sounds like a sermon illustration). (Heidi Bowes, Eurasia regional NMI coordinator)



Eurasia Region—The second brown jar is also made out of clay with the same concept as the item mentioned above, just a different shape. (Heidi Bowes)

India—The church used decorated cans as collection containers and stacked them in the shape of a church as people gave their offering, providing a visual image for people to understand the purpose of the offering. (Shradha Saraf, pastor)



Mexico—The Landivar Church of the Nazarene promotes Alabaster to children using recycled materials. Children make a pig, using three-liter plastic beverage bottles for the body, legs, and pig’s tail. The bottle cap forms the nose with nostrils colored with permanent marker. Colored magazine clippings were used for the eyes and ears. The same materials (colored bottles) were used to make the butterfly. Every child makes his or her own pig or butterfly at the beginning of September and is instructed to collect money for Alabaster. The offering will be received on the last Sunday of the month. (Ana Maria Crocker de Diaz, Mesoamerica regional NMI coordinator)



Eurasia Region by Way of U.S.A.—It was given to me from someone on the region, and I was told it was a good Alabaster box. However, I can't remember who gave it to me, and I was a little uncertain at the time if the giver actually used these for this purpose (on the bottom it says "made in the U.S.A."). It seemed like a good idea to me though. (Heidi Bowes)



U.S.A.—J. Bret Metcalfe, pastor of the Ebensburg (Pennsylvania) Lakeside Church of the Nazarene, commented, "A daughter-in-law of one of the church folk's works with pottery....They suggested having clay jars made so that when the time for the Alabaster Offering came, the people could break the pots; and just as Mary broke her offering to Jesus, they could break their offering to Him. Alabaster Sunday morning was very exciting when the kids were invited to come forward and take turns breaking the Alabaster jars into an offering box. There was quite a mess to sort through with coins and pottery, but the imagery was unmistakable." (Sandy Sisler, pastor and Eastern U.S.A. regional representative to the Global NMI Council)

Eurasia Region...Possibly Russia—(Connie Norris, missionary)

