



Children in Missions

Warm-up Activity:

1. Name ways children at your church are involved in missions.
2. Share ways that your child expresses their faith.

Scripture:

Old Testament

For you created my inmost beings; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. (Psalm 139:13-16)

New Testament

He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." (Mark 9:36-37 NIV)



Case Study/Feature Article

At the end of one of our opening ceremony programs, I went to greet the parents of campers who were dropping their children off for a week of summer camp at CrossRoads. I shared information about the week and ways to communicate with their child, answered questions, and invited them to come back the following Saturday for the closing ceremony. As parents left, there was a couple sticking around. I went to introduce myself and asked if they had any particular questions. The gentleman began to explain that he was a politics professor at Georgetown University. He said he had googled summer camps and thought he got the most for his money with CrossRoads. He signed his twelve year old daughter up for not one, but two consecutive weeks! He explained that he was from South Korea and he paid for his wife and children to come over to experience American culture. He said that he was not a Christian and neither was his family, but was eager for his daughter to learn about Christianity. He was also excited for his daughter to meet other girls her age. This twelve year old girl sang all of the camp songs, climbed the rock wall, navigated through the low ropes challenge course, swam in the pool, competed in Olympic games, and hiked the mountainous trails. She also listened and

asked questions during the daily Bible study and devotions time. She learned about prayer and worship during the evening worship services. During a time of reflection at the end of the week, this South Korean girl asked Christ to be in her life.

This particular camper's experience and decision not only affected the way she now viewed her faith, but also for the people around her. When her father brought her for the second week, he said that she had told them of her camp experiences and what it means to be a Christian. She is now in South Korea and perhaps she shared her new decision with her friends and relatives. Her father, who is teaching fall courses at a prestigious university, was happy that he chose CrossRoads to send his daughter to experience American culture and learn about Christianity. To follow up with the camper's testimony and decision, we have networked the father with churches in northern Virginia. The counselors that worked with this camper believe this was one of the highlights of the summer. They saw how God's hand wove these circumstances together to purposefully lead this camper to CrossRoads from the other side of the world.

The Theological Issue

A community of faith is an extended family of babies, crawlers, toddlers, runners, and those with walkers and wheelchairs worshipping together-pilgrims journeying together in a covenant community.

Children learn best from experiences. They learn about God's love when God's people love them, about being a child of God when they belong to God's family of faith, about worship by worshipping with all God's people, and about ministry by serving the needs of others alongside adults. Adults, too, learn by experience. They learn to value the contributions. They learn to understand the world from a child's eyes by listening to a child. By relating to children, an adult can learn to "become like a little child."

Separate children's worship allows parents and other adults to worship without being disturbed by whispering, wiggling, bored children who ask to go to the restroom and drop hymnbooks or quarters during silent prayer. Children interrupt worship just like they interrupt quiet meals and restful sleep. If we want children to discover the God of grace and learn to participate in the community of faith, we will have to accept their invitations. We must look for ways to involve children in worship and not expect them to sit quietly while parents worship.

-exerpt from *Precious in His Sight* by Diana Garland

Responsive Reading

Congregation: Let us give praise to God!

Children: For green grass, cats, dogs and turtles.

Congregation: Let us give praise to God!

Children: For water, butterflies, trees and flowers.

Congregation: Let us give praise to God!

Children: For rain forests, birds, food and the sun

Congregation: Let us give praise to God!

Children: For air conditioning and us.

Congregation: Let us give praise to God!

Children: Because God is good.

All: Let us give praise to God! Let the whole world praise Almighty God!

(Psalm of Praise written by first, second, and third grade classes for Children's Day. Published in *Precious in His Sight* by Diana Garland)

Involvement

- Rake leaves for the elderly.
- Become a pen pals with shut-ins
- Make Bible verse refrigerator magnets
- "Adopt" a grandparent who can't get out
- Plant and tend "Gardens of God" to grow food for needy families
- Save outgrown clothing for a local clothes closet
- Collect Campbell's soup labels for the Bland Ministry Center
- Make ABC books for migrant workers' children
- Make books on tape from Bible stories for preschoolers
- Collect soft toys and blankets for a children's hospital
- Give Christian children's coloring books and crayons to the local Department of Services
- Make a "prayer walk" in the area around your church, ending back at church for ice cream
- Make and send get well cards to sick church members
- Fill goody bags and send to college students during exams

Commitment

1. Find monthly mission opportunities for the children's groups in your church.
2. Once a month, keep all children in for the main worship service instead of going to children's church.
3. Pick one thing off of the "Involvement" list to do with your child.
4. Spend time with your child after a missions opportunity through dialogue, drawing, or writing about their feelings and experience.

Resources

- ★ *Window on the World* by Daphne Spraggett
- ★ *Stirring Up a World of Fun: International Recipes, Wacky Facts & Family Time Ideas* by Nanette Goings
- ★ *Missions Moments: Foundational Messages and Activities for Children* by Mitzi Eaker
- ★ *Families on Mission: Ideas for Teaching Your Preschooler to Love, Share, and Care* by Angie Quantrell
- ★ *First Steps in Missions, vol. 12* by Millie Sebek
- ★ *What Does It Mean to Be Poor?* by Joye Smith
- ★ *Supermom Has Left the Building: Proverbs 31 Woman in a 21st Century World* by Judith Edwards
- ★ *Spiritual Moms: An Inspirational Guide for Women of Influence* by Lynn Wilford
- ★ *Love Notes in Lunchboxes: And Other Ideas to Color Your Child's Day* by Linda Gilden
- ★ *Precious in His Sight* by Diana Garland

On-line Resources

Children in Action: www.wmucia.com

Caleb Project: www.calebproject.org

Chronological Bible Storying: www.chronologicalbiblestorying.com

Girls in Action: www.gapassport.com

International Resources: www.cultureforkids.com

Royal Ambassadors: www.kidzplace.org/adult/royalambassadors/ra.asp

Summer camp at CrossRoads: www.crossroadsccl.com