



DiscipleLand

Missions Education

Level 4, Quarter C—Valiant Voyagers

Integrate these World-missions concepts into your **DiscipleLand** lesson. Introduce your children to one missions truth each lesson.

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4C—Missions Education

The Local Team

Teacher Intro—Missions is an exciting adventure of fulfilling God's role for Christians by taking the Gospel message to every people group and language on earth. So far in the previous quarters, kids have learned an overview of God's missional activity throughout the centuries. The role of modern missionaries continues to change and adapt to new technologies and opportunities.

This quarter we will explore how the local church can be involved in missions. In the Book of Acts, we have been learning how the early believers grew in their knowledge of Christ and as they lived out the principles that He taught...the Church grew! Now let's take a look at some of the ways the local church can continue to grow by taking the message of Jesus Christ to people who haven't heard about salvation.

Lesson 1—The Local Church Helps You Grow (Living Things Grow)

Supplies: stopwatch or watch with a second hand, seeds, soil, and paper cups

Let's see how many living things you can name. I'll keep track of the time, and at the same time all of you can call out the names of as many living things as you can think of in one minute. Use a stopwatch or watch to time the kids as they name living things.

Wow, you thought of lots of living things! What do all of these living things have in common? Let the children answer. **Living things that are healthy will grow. Plants are living things that begin as a seed. The seed that receives water and sunlight will grow. As I look around the room, I notice that over the past year you have all grown. Some living things grow faster than others, but growth takes place in every living plant, animal, or person.** Let the children discuss rates of growth they've observed in plants, their pets, or in their younger siblings.

When we have a relationship with God, we want our relationship to grow and get stronger as we learn more about God and spend more time with Him. In some ways, our Christian walk is like a living thing that grows. Instead of needing sunlight and water, we need to spend time talking to God and learning about Him. The local church can help you grow in your relationship with God. What are some ways the

church helps you grow in your relationship with God? Help the children recognize the different programs, teachings, and ways your local church helps Christians grow in their relationship with God. **Should the church be the only source of help in your relationship with God?** (No, each person should also take responsibility to talk with God, read His Word, and be growing closer to God.)

Let's make a reminder that living things grow and we want to grow in our relationship with God. Pass out the paper cups. Let each child fill the cup with soil and plant a seed. While the children plant their seeds, talk about your local church. Explain some of the church's history, pastors, changes the church has gone through, etc.

Just like your local church helps you to grow, your local church should grow also. When a local church is healthy, it is growing in the ways it ministers to people. As it expands the ways it reaches out to the people in the church and in the community, it will probably grow in the number of people who come to the church. What are some ways our church could grow? (Possible answers: start new ministries to reach new people or to help people within your church, begin a coffee house ministry, etc.)

Pray: Pray for each child by name to grow in his or her relationship with God. Ask children to pray for their local church to grow and to be effective in helping the people to grow in their relationships with God.

Lesson 2—Bearing Fruit

Supplies: variety of fruits or pictures of fruits, grape vine (real or fake), grapes in little clear baggies for each child

Imagine that you planted a whole garden of tomato plants because you love tomatoes. You watched as they grew tall and looked great. But day after day and week after week, you waited but didn't see any tomatoes growing on the plant. It is possible for a plant to get lots of sun and water, but to never get pollinated through bees spreading pollen or wind blowing the pollen from plant to plant. If the plants grew and grew, but never produced any tomatoes, think about how disappointed you would be. Let the children share any experiences they've had with a plant not producing fruit.

Sometimes Christians are like the tomato plant. They may grow in their relationship with God, but they forget about what Jesus told His followers—to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19,20). Making disciples means to tell people about Jesus and help them become followers of Christ. Jesus spent a lot of time explaining the importance of producing fruit in the form of people becoming part of God's family through accepting Jesus' forgiveness of sins.

When a Christian makes disciples for Christ, then that Christian is producing fruit. We look at the fruit on a tree and we know exactly what kind of tree it is. Hold up some fruit or pictures of fruits and let the children identify them. If you have helped someone follow Jesus, your fruit shows that you are a Christ follower.

Jesus loved to use local examples or objects to teach concepts to His followers. The area was full of vineyards with grape vines, so that's the example He used. Hold up a grape vine. In John 15:5, Jesus identifies Himself as the vine and Christians are the branches that grow from the vine. Point to each branch on your grape vine and name each child in your class. Let's read John 15:8 together. Have the children find the verse and read it together. What will bring glory to God according to this verse? (It brings glory to God to bear much fruit.) How do Christians bear fruit? (Christians bear fruit by telling others about Jesus.)

The local church is a gathering of Christians who all have the same job—to bear fruit! Let's read Acts 9:31 to find out what helped the early church to grow. Have the students read the verse. What helped the Church grow? (The Holy Spirit strengthened and encouraged the believers and the Church grew.) How might the Holy Spirit help you to bear fruit? Possible answers: give me boldness to tell a friend about Jesus, provide opportunities at school to talk about how Jesus has changed my life, etc.

Pray: As you hand each child a little baggie of grapes to eat,

pray for the child by name to desire to bear much fruit and find opportunities to witness.

Lesson 3—Multiplying: Church Planting

We know that Jesus wants His followers to bear fruit for Him by making disciples of all people groups in all languages. Imagine how impossible the task would be for one person to do alone! Jesus knew it was a big task and He began with twelve followers. Those twelve went out and the numbers of followers grew. It is like multiplying. Draw stick figures on the board to represent the concept of multiplication. One person tells two people about Jesus. They call on the name of Jesus to be saved and both of them tell two more people. Then those people believe in Jesus and tell two more people. Soon we have lots of people who accepted Jesus' forgiveness of sins and now they need a place to grow in their relationship with Jesus. Suppose these new believers live in a place where there isn't a church for them to attend and learn more about Jesus. What might happen? Possible answers: they won't grow in their relationship with God, they might forget about God, they might have lots of questions about God that they can't get answered, etc. What are some possible ways for the new believers to grow in their relationship with God? Possible answers: the person who told them about Jesus could regularly meet with them, they could read the Bible for themselves, they could learn from TV preachers, radio sermons, Christian websites, etc. You thought of some good ideas! One way to help people to grow in Christ is to have someone local who knows them and can regularly help them. Just like your local church helps you to grow, a local church can be a real blessing to new followers of Christ.

Have the children name some of the local churches in your area. Not all areas have a local church. Discuss any areas, neighborhoods or cities that might not have a local church. Not all groups of people in an area have a church that reaches out to them. Talk about local ethnic groups that might not have a church ministering to them in their languages. Now we can see how the local church has the opportunity to grow a new church where there isn't a church that is reaching people. We call that church planting. Let the children share any knowledge they have about church planting.

Pray: Ask children to volunteer to pray for new believers to find a place to help them grow in their relationship with Christ and for new churches that are being planted to reach out and help people know about Jesus.

Lesson 4—Build a Local Church Team

Supplies: paper, pencils, markers

Have the children talk about their favorite team sports. **What would happen if an athlete tried to play alone, without a team?** Let the students discuss possible scenarios of a player playing a team sport alone. **Sometimes there is a fantastic athlete, but that athlete needs a team around him or her to help. One player, no matter how good, needs to be part of a team. When a team works together, they can accomplish great things.**

It is a big job to go and make disciples for Jesus. God knows exactly how big the job is and He would never give a job that is too big for Him to help us do. Let's read Luke 10:2 to see what help we need for this big job. Have the children find the verse and read it together. **What help can we get for the task of telling others about Jesus?** (We can ask God to send workers to help with the job.)

One way to build a good team for the job is to start right where you are right now—in your local church! How can the local church be part of the team? Possible answers: send missionaries, support them, send people on a missions trip, etc. **In the upcoming lessons, we will learn some of the specific roles the local church can play as part of the missions team. Missions is all about making disciples of all people—every people group and every language spoken. The job is so huge that it needs a good team. The good news is that we can ask God to send workers to help with the big job!**

Pray: Spend some time letting children volunteer to pray for God to send workers to people groups around the world so they will learn about Jesus. If you have a world map, globe, or inflatable ball with countries on it, let children pick a country and pray for the Lord of the harvest to send workers to that country.

Activity: Have the children make “Wanted” posters. Wanted poster: Will you be part of the team? Kids could write Luke 10:2 on the poster or write about the need for a team to work together to make disciples for Christ. You may want to put these posters on a bulletin board or hang them in the hallway.

5—Who Will Be Part of the Team?

Supplies: paper, pencils, markers

Imagine a football team that was made up of all quarterbacks. Or what if a soccer team had a goalie playing each of the different positions. Would those teams be very successful? Let the children explain the disasters these teams would have. **Each member of the team has a different job to do and has different skills needed to do the job.** Ask children to describe some of the different jobs and skills needed to play their favorite sports.

Just like a sports team is made up of players with different roles and skills, so is the local church team that wants to make disciples for Christ. We want to have a team that is able to produce fruit and help people learn about salvation. What if each member of the team follower, who would lead? Discuss the need for a good leader and good followers. Use some specific examples from your local church. **What if every member of the team was teacher? What other jobs or roles might be needed to balance the team?** Give each child an opportunity to contribute to the discussion.

God's Word talks about working together on the same team. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-20 we will discover that being on the same team is like being part of the same body. Ask volunteers to read the verses.

Let's play a quick game to help us understand what God is saying. Have the kids stand together in a group representing the body. Tell the children that they are all eyes. Let the kids tell all of the things they see. Ask the group to move to the other side of the room. They can't because they don't have any feet. Play again with everyone being ears that can hear, but they can't move. Let the children return to their seats. **What would happen if the body feet but no eyes or ears?** Allow kids an opportunity to explain their answers.

Sometimes people join a team but they don't have the same vision or goal as the rest of the team. They may have skills that the team needs, but they may not really understand the importance of the job the team is doing. What kind of vision or goal should the members of the local church team have? Possible suggestions: heart for the lost, desire to reach people with the Gospel, passion to make disciples, etc.

Pray: Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be part of the team that will make disciples for Christ. Ask God to begin to show each child his or her role in missions as part of the local church team.

Activity: Let kids draw a picture of themselves and put these on a bulletin board with the title “Disciplemakers: Our Local Team.”

Lesson 6—Local Church's Role: Educate

Let's pretend that you are visiting a foreign country and you really want to be a good citizen and follow the customs and laws. How would you learn about the country's laws?

Possible answers: read them, talk to people, take a class, watch how the people act and what they do, etc.

In some ways, when a person asks Jesus into his or her heart, they are entering a foreign country where they want to learn how to be like Christ. A local church can really help someone understand the Bible and know how to live a life that pleases God. The local church can also help Christians understand God's desire for all Christians to make disciples. Have a student read Matthew 28:19-20. **Some people call Matthew 28:19-20 the Great Commission. Who needs to follow this command?** (This command is for all followers of Christ.) **This verse tells all Christians to be involved in helping others understand Jesus and his plan of salvation. Even kids can and should be involved in making disciples of all nations.**

The local church can help educate people of all ages about the big job of making disciples. When you learn a new sport or how to play an instrument, someone teaches you what to do and how to do it. Missions can be just like that! The local church can explain why it is important for Christians to be involved in the mission of telling people in your city, your state, your country, and in other countries about Jesus.

What are some things our church does to help educate people about missions? If possible, ask a representative of your church's missions committee to come and share with the students some of the ways they educate people in the church about missions. Talk about programs, special speakers, missions fairs, missionaries from your church, and other ways your church educates attendees. You may want to talk to the children's director so you can emphasize any missions education done in the children's ministry.

What are some fun ways our church could educate people about missions? Encourage the kids to brainstorm some exciting, fun ways of educating people such as: show missions movies, have a children's choir from another country, have an international food night, etc.

Pray: Lead the children in a time of prayer for your church to desire to educate the church about missions and to plan events that creatively teach God's heart for all people to know and worship Him.

Activity: Begin making a book of ways the local church can be part of the team that makes disciples of all people. Each week, students can add more ideas, pictures, or stories. At the end of the quarter, present these books to your church's missions committee or leadership team.

Let the children select a sheet of construction paper for the cover and blank paper for the inside pages. Fold the paper in half and staple it along the folded edge for the binding. Children can design a cover and choose a title for their books such as Missions at ____ (your local church name) or Our Local Team of Disciple Makers. Then have students write ideas or draw pictures to explain ways your church can or does educate church members about missions. Collect the books and keep them so kids can add to the book each week.

Lesson 7—Local Church's Role: Pray

Supplies: gift-wrapped box

What is the best present that you have ever received? Let the kids tell about their favorite gifts. **When you pray for someone, you are giving them a gift of taking their needs or requests directly to God. Who have given the gift of your prayers to?** Give each child an opportunity to tell whom they have prayed for.

Usually we pray for someone we know. Sometimes you may be asked to pray for someone's friend or relative. Have you prayed for someone you didn't know? Discuss situations where students have prayed for someone they didn't know.

There are many people around the world who don't know about God or Jesus' free gift of forgiveness of sins. These people don't know that they can pray to God. They need someone to give them the gift of prayer and ask God to send Christians to help them know about Jesus. Remind your class about Luke 10:2 and lead the class in a prayer for workers to go to the mission fields.

We don't have to know the people by name, God knows them and He knows their needs. Let's take some time and give the gift of our prayers to people around the world. Take the wrapped gift and hand it to a child. Have the student choose a people group and pray for them to learn about Jesus and call on His name. After praying, the student should give the gift to another child. Continue until all the children have prayed for a people group.

We can also give the gift of prayer to our missionaries. Name the missionaries your church supports and ask for children to volunteer to hold the gift as they pray for a missionary.

What are some ways our church can help us in our role of prayer for missions? Possible answers: let us know prayer requests of the missionaries, give praise report of a missionary's answered prayer, highlight a people group and give some prayer points for them, pray for church members on missions trips, etc. **Let's brainstorm some ideas that our church could do to help everyone know why and how they can pray for missions.** Write the ideas on the board and discuss who in your church children can contact with their prayer ideas.

Pray: Take time to pray for your pastor and the people on the missions committee.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books that were started last week. They should write or draw prayer ideas for missions.

Lesson 8—Local Church's Role: Give

Has our church taken an offering for a missionary or to send to help people in other places learn about Jesus? Discuss any special offerings and how the money was used. **Why do we send money to missionaries?** Let children respond. **When we send money to a missionary, we are enabling them to spend their time building relationships and helping people learn about Jesus instead of spending eight hours a day working at a job to afford to live. Some missionaries are tentmakers like Paul. What is a tentmaker?** (A tent maker works at a job and then shares Jesus as he or she works and has relationships with the people.) **Tentmakers often receive some financial support also.**

What are some ways a missionary could use a gift of money? Possible answers: buy a plane ticket for a visit, buy Bibles, build a church, pay for training, etc. **What are some ways our church could help raise money for missions?** Let the kids brainstorm fundraising ideas. Discuss which ideas are possibilities for your church and why others may not be successful.

Giving money is just one way we can give to missions. What are some things you could give to missions? Possible answers: toys for a missionary to give to kids, clothes for an orphanage, help work on a project like painting the house of a missionary, draw pictures to send to a missionary, etc.

Time is a great gift to give to missions. What are some ways you can give some of your time to missions? Answers could include: put a missions insert in the bulletin, volunteer to play with children while their parents are at a missions committee meeting, bake cookies for a missions fundraiser, etc.

Another gift to give to missions is your talents. Each person has special abilities that God has given. Some people are able to draw, sing, teach, encourage others, make friends easily, learn languages, and many other talents that can be used for missions. What are some of your talents that could be used for missions? Allow time for each child to contribute to the conversation.

Pray: Have the children gather in a large circle. Begin the prayer time by praying for the child on your right to use his or her special talents and interests for missions and making disciples of all people. Then have that child pray for the student to his right. Continue around the circle until each child has received prayer.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books. They should write or draw ideas of things that can be given for missions (money, time or talents).

Lesson 9—Local Church's Role: Welcome

Supplies: welcome mat (optional)

Have you ever gone to a new school, a new church, or moved to a new town? Let the kids tell about their experiences and then answer the following questions. **How do you feel in these new situations? How would you feel if someone warmly welcomed you in a new situation?**

Hold up the welcome mat. **A church that wants to make disciples and bear fruit for Jesus should look for ways to welcome people to come and learn about Jesus. People who are new to your church, your town, or even to your country will want to feel welcomed. You and your church can help welcome people and show God's love to them. What are some ways to welcome someone to our church?** Possible answers: have a party for new residents, give them a present, be friendly, invite them to a dinner to meet other people, etc.

God does a great job of bringing the mission field to our community when people from other countries move here to find work or go to school. Let's think of some creative ways to welcome people from other countries. As the kids brainstorm ideas, write them on the board. Discuss any of your church's programs to teach English or opportunities to work with internationals at a local college. **Which of these ideas would you be willing to do?** Give each child an opportunity to answer.

Have each child find a partner and role-play. One child can pretend to be from another country and the other child is the welcomer. After a couple of minutes, let the kids switch roles. **Did your partner do or say something that made you feel welcomed?** Let the students share successful ideas. **If you felt welcomed, do you think you would feel like learning about Jesus from your welcomer?** Allow children time to explain their answers.

Pray: Ask for volunteers to pray for your church to be a welcoming church. End the prayer time by praying for each student by name to find opportunities to be a welcomer to someone this week.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books. They should write or draw ideas ways to be a welcomer.

Lesson 10—Local Church's Role: Encourage

Supplies: Bibles, list of all of your church's missionaries

Begin the lesson with this fast paced Bible game to find out what word all of these verses have in common. Say the first Scripture reference. Have the children race to find the verse. The first child to locate the verse should read the verse aloud to the class. Then call out the next reference and continue playing until all of the verses have been read. Verses: Acts 11:23; Acts 13:15; Acts 15:32; Acts 16:40; Acts 18:27; Acts 20:2; Acts 27:36; Acts 28:15.

What word did all of these verses have in common? (Encourage.) **In many of these verses, believers encouraged Paul and he was able to continue on with his work. What are some ways that missionaries today might feel discouraged?**

Possible answers: sad being far away from friends, family, and things that are familiar, they might have a hard time learning the new language; they might feel like they aren't producing fruit, etc. **What might encourage them and help them stick with their task of making disciples?** Possible answers: if someone wrote or called them, receiving encouraging emails, visitors, prayers, etc.

Make two lists on the board: Ways I can encourage and Ways our class/church can encourage. Have the children brainstorm ideas to write on the board. Talk about any ideas that your class could do and make plans to encourage missionaries.

Take the list of missionaries your church supports and make cards for them. Set out paper, stickers, markers and rubber stamps. Let the kids make cards so that each missionary receives encouragement from your class.

Pray: Have the children gather in small groups of three to four and give each group a list of the names of your church's missionaries. Let each group pray for each missionary and ask God to send encouragement to each one.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books. They should write or draw ideas ways to be an encourager.

Lesson 11—Local Church's Role: Go

Supplies: ask someone who has gone on a missions trip to come and tell your class about the trip

Most churches provide opportunities for people to go on a missions trip. These trips help people get a taste of what it is like to be a missionary and take the Good News of Jesus to people who haven't heard about Him. Sometimes trips give people medical help or they might build a home or a church in a village. What missions trip opportunities are available to people in our church? Discuss upcoming missions trips or local outreach activities. If you invited someone to talk about going on a missions trip, let the person share and then allow children to ask questions.

If you could go on a missions trip, where would you like to go and why? Give each child an opportunity to share.

Maybe you aren't old enough to go on a missions trip that the church is doing, but there are ways for you to be a goer.

Read each of the following topics and let the kids discuss ways they can be goers and disciple makers in each situation.

- Be a goer in your school.
- Be a goer in your neighborhood.
- Be a goer in your vacation. (Talk about ways to turn a family vacation into an opportunity to share the gospel message with people.)
- Be a goer on a family missions trip.

Pray: Pray for people from your church who are on or will go on a missions trip. Also, let each child pray for opportunities to be a goer.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books. They should write or draw ideas ways to be a goer.

Lesson 12—Local Church's Role: Connect

Supplies: child's puzzle (about 25 pieces)

Have the children find a partner. Let each pair have a turn putting the puzzle together and time each group. Congratulate the pair that put the puzzle together the fastest.

Putting the puzzle together meant taking pieces and connecting them to form a picture. Missions is like a puzzle and the church can help connect all the pieces. Each puzzle piece represents a person with special talents and interests who wants to be part of the Great Commission to make disciples or Christ followers of all people. The local church can help connect the people with other people who share similar talents and desires. Also, the church can connect the interested people with opportunities to serve God. The opportunities could include attending a missions fair to learn about organizations that send missionaries. The local church can also connect people with missions roles and ministries in the church. We've learned about the different roles that are needed to help make disciples. What are the different roles? (The roles are: educate, pray, give, welcome encourage, and go.) Write each role on the board. Ask each child to write his name under the role they would like to do.

Connectors are always looking for people they can bring in to be part of the missions ministries or roles to help make disciples. Who are some people you think would be a good addition to our church's missions roles? Encourage kids to name people and tell why they would fit well into a specific missions role.

Pray: Pray for each child to be connected into missions and to develop the lifelong habit of being producing fruit for Jesus by making disciples.

Activity: Allow time for children to add to their missions books. They should write or draw ideas ways to be a connector. Have the children take their books and give them to members of the missions committee or your church's leadership team.