



DiscipleLand

Missions Education

Level 5, Quarter D—Tomorrow's Champions

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

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5D—Missions Education

The Visionaries

Teacher Intro—History is replete with examples of periods when the Church tried to lead itself through human effort—with disastrous results. Only when Christians fully submit to Christ’s authority and the Holy Spirit’s direction is the glory of God’s will revealed and accomplished. Never is this more evident than in missions. People with the best intentions can quickly become sidetracked or waylaid when they place their own missions agenda before God’s plan. What’s worse, they miss out on God’s power to bring them to undreamt-of heights of success for His kingdom. Your kids will examine missionary efforts in the light of full submission to the Lord and His purposes. They’ll see that taking God seriously leads to serious blessings!

Lesson 1—What Is a Visionary?

Supplies: variety of seeds

Take one seed from each packet and tape the seeds on a piece of paper. Have the kids guess what kind of plant each seed will become. Write their guesses down. Then reveal the identity of each seed.

As you look at each seed, it is hard to imagine what the seed might grow to become. A farmer has worked with seeds and plants, so he can easily look at a seed and imagine it as a fully grown plant. Sometimes missionaries need to be like the farmer and visualize the potential for reaching a group of people with the salvation message about Jesus Christ. When a missionary can imagine or visualize a way to reach the unreached people, the missionary can be called a visionary.

Visionaries take a dream or idea and then search for ways to make that dream or idea become reality. Do you have idea or a dream that you would like to become reality? Let kids share. **Some visionaries have become rich inventing a new product. Some visionaries solve problems faced by a community or group of people. In what ways might a missionary be a visionary?** Encourage responses. **A missionary visionary seeks God’s vision and wants to fulfill what God wants to happen. In these lessons we will learn how to seek God’s vision and fulfill it.**

Pray: Praise God for creating us with the ability to imagine and visualize things. Ask God to inspire missionaries with creative ways to share God’s love and the Good News about Jesus Christ.

Lesson 2—Ask God for a Vision

Supplies: paper, pencils

Give each person a blank sheet of paper and a pencil. **Think about something that you’ve always wanted to do and quickly draw a picture of it.** Give a couple of minutes for the students to draw. **Now, turn the paper over and write “God’s vision” on this side of the paper.** After the students write the words, ask them **Do you think God’s vision for what He wants you to do is the same as your vision for you?** Let the children answer.

Missionaries can do wonderful things to help people, but they need to make sure they are doing what God has planned. What might happen if missionaries spend their time doing something good, but it isn’t what God wants done? Allow responses. **We can have great visions or dreams for what we want to do, but we will be more effective for God when we follow His vision for us. In Jeremiah 29:11 we read that God has thought about us and has good plans for each person.** Have kids look up the verse and read it together. Encourage them to highlight or underline this verse.

God created the world and He has a vision and a plan for the world. The Lord’s plan isn’t a secret—it’s clearly shown from Genesis to Revelation. Read Revelation 7:9-10. **Based on these verses, what is God’s vision?** Let kids answer. **God is quite a visionary—He sees people worshiping Him where there currently aren’t people worshiping Him. We can join in that vision and help missionaries around the world accomplish the task. Let’s pray for the Holy Spirit to show us our part in accomplishing God’s giant vision for the world!** Have the children draw a picture of what God might have them do to help accomplish His vision of people worshiping around His throne.

Pray: Praise God for sharing His vision of having all the people of the world worshiping Him. Ask God to create an excitement among believers in Christ to join in and help accomplish God’s vision for all people to worship Him.

Lesson 3—Ask the Holy Spirit for Direction

If you called someone on the phone and asked them to come to where you are, they would ask for directions. Have you given directions to someone? Did they follow the directions? Let the children explain situations where they gave directions that were properly followed and times when the directions weren't followed.

There are many times in life where it is very important that we follow directions. Let's play a quick game to see how good you are at following directions. Quickly give a long series of directions for the students to follow. Example: touch your nose, walk over to the door, turn around five times, tap your head while you return to your seat, and snap twice while wriggling your nose.

Sometimes people give directions that are hard to follow. When missionaries want to serve God, they need good directions to follow. If they give themselves the plans and directions, they probably won't wind up where God wants them to be. Missionaries need to ask the Holy Spirit to lead them and give them the directions to go with the vision from God.

Let's see how the Holy Spirit promises to help missionary visionaries go in the God's direction. Assign Scripture passages to volunteers who will read them to the group. Write a list on the board that details the Holy Spirit's role in each verse.

- John 14:26 (teach and remind us of what Jesus has said)
- John 3:34 (knows the words of God)
- John 16:12-15 (guide us in truth, speak what He hears, tell you what is to come, make known to us what Jesus knows from the Father)

Have you ever experienced the Holy Spirit leading you or showing you God's direction? Encourage responses by sharing a situation from your life.

God told us His giant vision for the world is to have everyone worship Him. All Christians have a job to do to help make God's vision a reality. The Holy Spirit promises to direct us to know our role and become excited about God's really big vision. Missionaries can confidently pursue a vision that is given to them by the Holy Spirit!

Pray: Praise God for giving us the Holy Spirit who will teach us and guide us to go God's direction. Ask God to help the missionaries clearly recognize and confidently follow the Holy Spirit's direction and guidance to them.

Lesson 4—Pray and Listen for God's Voice

Supplies: cell phone or telephone

Make a brief phone call to someone as part of this illustration. **I just called my friend because I had a quick question to ask. Explain what you asked and the reply you received. I could have asked the question and then hung up, but I wouldn't have received my answer. Have you ever had a one sided conversation where the other person did all the talking? How did that feel?** Let students respond.

Sometimes we ask God something but then don't bother to listen for the answer. Or we might do all the talking and not let God speak to us. When we ask God to show us a vision or an idea of what we should do—be ready to listen and hear what God says!

Have you ever thought you heard God speak to you? Encourage responses by sharing personal examples. **Sometimes we need to practice a skill that isn't very strong. Listening for God's voice is something Christians should practice. The Bible gives us advice in Psalm 46:10. Ask a volunteer to read the verse. Discuss ways to be still and know that God is God. What ways could you practice listening for God's voice?**

Sometimes we might be hesitant to believe that we really did hear God speak to us. Young Samuel in the Bible didn't realize he was hearing God's voice until the priest Eli told him it was God speaking. If you aren't sure if you heard God's voice, ask Him to repeat what He said. If you aren't sure if it really is God's plan, look in the Bible because God will never tell you to do something that goes against what He has already said in the Bible. When you pray, you seek God's vision and listen for Him speaking to you. Lead a discussion about hearing God's voice.

Missionary visionaries want to get an idea of what God has for them to do, so they will seek God through prayer and then listen for God's answer. Sometimes God's answer might come through hearing a voice inside them, it might come through Bible verses, or they might hear God speaking to them through other Christians.

Pray: Thank God that He does speak to us through the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and other believers in Christ! Ask God to help the missionaries to spend time praying and listening for God's plan to be revealed to them.

Lesson 5—Recognize God’s Vision

What are some foods that have more than one way to prepare them? (Example: pizza—some people put cheese over the toppings and some put cheese under the toppings.) **What jobs have more than one way to accomplish them?** Encourage responses.

The Bible begins and ends with God’s vision for people to worship Him. God has a really big vision and there are many, many ways to accomplish that job. The Bible is the best place to look for ideas of what God’s vision for you might be. Let’s find a few of the ideas or visions of how to show people God’s love and tell the Good News about Jesus so they will worship God. Assign Scripture passages to volunteers who will read them to the group. Write a list on the board that details good ideas and visions in each verse.

- Ephesians 4:32 (kind, compassionate, forgiving)
- Galatians 5:22-23 (fruit of the spirit)
- Matthew 25:35-40 (feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, invite in strangers, clothe people, take care of the sick, visit people in prison)

What ways could missionaries accomplish each of these ideas? Allow time for kids to consider ways missionaries are doing these actions around the world. Encourage children to focus on missionaries sponsored by your church or personally known by the families.

When a missionary goes to a mission field, he or she needs to get a vision from God and be led by the Holy Spirit to fulfill that dream of what the missionary can do to serve God. There are so many good ideas in the Bible—they won’t ever be without a vision!

Sometimes you may wonder if a dream you just had might be God showing you a job He has for you to do. In Bible times, one of Jesus’ disciples, John, had a really big vision. John wrote down what he saw and today you can read that vision—the book of Revelation! So when you think God might be talking with you, write down what you hear. Pray about it and share it with other Christians who can help you understand the vision and what you should do.

Pray: Thank God for giving us His Word that is full of great visions of jobs that each Christ follower can do. Ask God to encourage missionaries to recognize God’s vision for their lives and pursue it with all their energy and ability.

Lesson 6—Use Your Passions and Special Gifts

Describe your ideal future job if money or training didn’t matter. Let each child explain why he or she chose that particular answer. **Each one of us has God-given interests and talents that are unique to us.** Read Psalm 139:13-16. **What do you learn from these verses?** Let students answer.

People who love something or have a strong passion for something enjoy spending time doing it. If you like ice skating, you will look forward to any opportunity to skate. When a missionary has a love for a certain country or people group, God might have placed that love within the person so he or she would desire to see those people learn about the Lord. God created us with a plan in mind and when we ask Him to lead us to that plan—we can trust that He will! God would never give a vision or dream to do something that we aren’t designed to do.

Missionary visionaries often use their interests to develop a new way to reach people with the Gospel. If a missionary loved riding a motorcycle, he or she might organize a group of motorcyclists to go on a motorcycle trip. On the trip, the missionary would have many opportunities to show God’s love and tell the bikers about Jesus. If a missionary loves children, he or she might teach children who live in garbage dumps and can’t attend a regular school. God places unique talents and interests in each person and can use those to bring glory and worship to Himself.

Engage the group in a conversation based on these questions:

- **What special love or passion do you have for something or a certain people group?**
- **What talents or gifts do feel like God has placed within you?**
- **How might those passions and gifts become part of the dream or vision of what God wants you to do to help reach the world with Gospel message?**

Pray: Thank God for creating each person in a special way and with a special plan. Ask God to help missionaries use their passions and interests to help lead people to desire a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Lesson 7—Observe Needs and Seek Solutions

If you were a missionary in an area where people kept getting sick from drinking the same water in the river where animals bathe and drink, you would want to find a solution to the problem. What are some possible solutions for this problem? Let kids suggest solutions. When people are sick or unable to find clean drinking water, they must take care of their immediate needs before they can really concentrate and listen to someone tell them about Jesus.

Jesus met the immediate needs of the people He ministered to so they could listen and receive His message of love. Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 15:32-38. How did Jesus observe a need and solve it? Encourage responses.

Lead a group discussion about the following questions. What are some physical needs that a missionary might find and how those needs could be met:

- in a jungle area?
- in a desert area?
- in a overcrowded city?
- in a refugee camp?

Pray: Praise God as the Only God who can meet all of our needs! Ask God to open missionaries' eyes to see the real needs of the people that must be met so they can see God's love and desire to have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Lesson 8—Make a Plan

God always has a plan and shares that plan with His worshipers. Moses heard God's plan through a very strange source—a burning bush! Read Exodus 3:1-10. When Moses started to question how he could be part of the plan, God clearly told Moses each step. Read Exodus 3:18-22. Did the things that the Lord told Moses at the burning bush actually occur later on? (Yes!)

God gave Moses a very clear vision of the goal and the way to accomplish the goal. Missionary visionaries can take the ideas and visions God has given them and make a plan to accomplish that goal. The Holy Spirit will lead in making plans.

Let's brainstorm some plans to help accomplish some goals of a missionary might have from God:

- **build a well in an African village that has suffered from famine** Possible ideas: research and learn about building a well, raise money to buy the tools and materials, contact people in that country to help buy the materials, get a plane ticket, go and do the work, etc.
- **start a school for children in a refugee camp** Possible ideas: learn about refugee camps, learn the language spoken in the refugee camp, raise money for some basic school supplies, contact and work with the government to fill in paperwork or follow regulations, work with local Christians to minister to the children in the refugee camp, etc.
- let children suggest other missionary visions or goals and appropriate plans to accomplish them

Pray: Praise God for sharing His plan with us when we seek Him. Ask God to empower missionaries to make effective plans that will allow them to serve God in ways that successfully bring people to hear about salvation and choose to have a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Lesson 9—Seek Helpers

Sometimes people might feel that God has given them a vision of a huge task that is far too difficult to do by themselves. Moses felt like that when he was given a vision to lead the people out of Egypt. One important step in fulfilling that plan was to speak to Pharaoh. Ask a volunteer to read Exodus 4:10. Fear and lack of speaking skills could have stopped Moses from doing what God had shown him to do. In order to fulfill the plan, Moses needed someone to help in the area of his weakness. Ask another volunteer to read Exodus 4:14-16. Moses' brother Aaron joined Moses and became the spokesperson.

Suppose you want to build a skate park in your neighborhood park. You have a great idea, but you would need people to help who understand the correct angles to build the ramps and are able to build the ramps. Visionaries think of fabulous solutions to problems or ideas of great new inventions, but they will be more successful when they explain their idea to people who have different skills needed to complete the project. Ask a volunteer to read Ecclesiastes 4:9. Imagine the success Christians might have in reaching the world with the salvation message if they truly worked together and helped each other complete the task!

Lead a discussion based on the following questions:

- What are benefits of having helpers?
- What are potential problems of having helpers?
- How might a missionary get helpers for his or her job?
- What ways can you help a missionary right now?

Pray: Thank God for the people who help missionaries fulfill the vision He's given them to reach a group of people. Ask God to encourage the missionaries to seek help and to be able to work well together so the Good News of Jesus Christ will be told to people in a way that inspires them to call upon Jesus as their Savior.

Lesson 10—Begin Work

Suppose a missionary visionary has a wonderful idea from God about how to reach a group of people that many other missionaries have failed to reach. The idea is like a seed in a seed packet. If you want to get the plant, you have to do the work needed of planting, watering, and weeding to get good result. So a missionary with an idea needs to be ready to do the work needed to get the good results of people choosing to follow Jesus.

Describe your feelings about each of these types of work:

- school work
- household chores
- work on a project that will earn you \$100

Most people are more willing to work hard when they realize there is a good reward for their work. What is a possible reward for work done by missionaries? Let kids respond and direct the conversation to focus on the best reward is when someone asks Jesus to be his or her Savior.

What reasons might keep a missionary from working to fulfill his or her vision from God? Let children suggest answers such as fear, lack of money to stay on the mission field, no helpers, etc. What Bible verse might help a missionary be a good worker? Take time to look up verses such as Luke 10:2, 2 Corinthians 9:8, and Psalm 68:35.

Have the students take turns personalizing and praying Colossians 1:10-12 for any missionaries the children know or receive support from your church.

Pray: Praise God for being our source of strength and help to work hard at the tasks He gives us to do! Ask God to encourage missionaries to work hard at the projects they have been given to do that will help people understand God's love for them and offer of forgiveness.

Lesson 11—Persevere

Name a situation where you exhibited perseverance. Allow time for each child to explain the situation to the group. **How did you feel when things got tough? How did you feel afterward, knowing that you had persevered?**

Every visionary needs perseverance! Imagine a situation where a missionary is working on an idea from God to reach an unreached people group. The first attempt to share the salvation message fails to get anyone to follow Jesus. If the missionary didn't have perseverance, the people would remain unreached. But, if the missionary had perseverance, he or she would continue to love the people and keep working to find ways to tell them about Jesus that inspires them to want to follow Him.

In the Bible, we read about a man who endured many problems as he tried to fulfill the vision God gave him to reach the unreached people of his time—the Gentiles. **What are some of the difficult situations that Paul endured as he worked hard to take the Gospel message to the Gentiles?**

Let the kids respond with their knowledge of Paul's problems such as being beaten, thrown in jail, stoned and left for dead, ship wrecked, bitten by a poisonous snake, etc.

What helps you to persevere? Encourage responses. Read Hebrews 12:1-3. **This verse reminds us that perseverance requires us to keep our eyes on Jesus. What are some ways you can keep your eyes on Jesus?** Let children respond. If you have time, let the students highlight or underline Bible verses that can be a reminder to persevere.

Pray: Praise God that Jesus persevered in His task on earth and is the perfect example for us! Ask God to send encouragement to missionaries to help them persevere as they fulfill the plan God gave them to share His love with people so they will become part of God's family.

Lesson 12—New Visionaries Needed

Supplies: masking tape

Imagine the scene in heaven around God's throne as people worship Him. Maybe people are given an opportunity to thank the person who told them about Jesus. Many people would be thankful that Floyd McClung fulfilled the vision God gave him of reaching the drug addicts in Afghanistan and the people in Amsterdam. Review what the children remember about the missionary biography of Floyd McClung.

Today, missionary visionaries are still needed all around the world to catch a vision for reaching unbelievers with the Good News of Jesus Christ. Now that we've learned about missionary visionaries, let's create a list of characteristics that are needed for future missionary visionaries. Invite the students to name different characteristics such as perseverance, courage, deep relationship with God, etc. On the chalkboard draw an outline of a person. As you talk about each characteristic of a visionary, write the characteristic inside the outline.

God might be asking you to be a missionary visionary. Let's see how we rate ourselves with having the characteristics of a missionary visionary. On the floor, use masking tape to make a long line and at one end put a 0 and the other end a 10. **As I name a characteristic, you can stand on the line to mark where you would rate that characteristic in yourself—0 is low and 10 is high.** Read a characteristic from the list on the board and let the children stand somewhere on the line. Ask for volunteers to explain why they rated themselves the way they did. Continue with each characteristic from the class list on the board.

Someday, you may feel God wants you to be a missionary visionary or be a helper to a missionary visionary. One thing we can all do right now is to pray for missionaries to clearly understand and fulfill the vision God has given them to share His love with a group of people. Spend time praying for missionary visionaries to have the characteristics mentioned by the class and to be effective in their work of growing God's kingdom in places where it doesn't yet exist!

Pray: Praise God for being the One True God who is worthy of all praise from all people around the world. Ask God to send missionary visionaries to work in areas that don't yet experience worshipping God.

