

GO!

An 5-Session Introduction to Missions & the Church World Wide for Children Ages 4-8



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LESSON 1: FAMILY OF GOD



OBJECTIVE:

In this lesson, children will learn that they can be/are part of the family of God. They will learn that the family of God lives all over the world and that we have brothers and sisters who we should love living in countries all over the globe!

Scripture References: Galatians 4:5 (NLT), Ephesians 1:5 (NLT)



ACTIVITIES:

Hooks (engage)

- Have children look at pictures of people in our church (use a church directory if possible), using their names and asking who they know, identifying grandparents, parents, etc.
POINT: Ask children if these people are part of their family. Most will say no, but prompt them to understand that they are members of God's family, and so are we! We aren't in the same little family, but we are all in the same big family. Discuss that we are not the only church; there are churches all over the world!
- Have children color paper "people" cutouts to look like themselves. When all children have finished, tape the representations of God's children on the board, the wall, or a posterboard.
POINT: Discuss how we all look different, act different, like different things, dress different ways, etc. But we're ALL part of God's family. He loves us all!
- Have children act out some things they do in a family (i.e.: chores, going on vacation, brushing teeth, opening gifts, eating dinner). Then, prompt them to act out things the family of God does (i.e.: worshipping, praying, cleaning the church).
POINT: Just as a small family works together to accomplish things, the family of God works together to accomplish things for His kingdom.

Main Activities (enlighten)

- Prepare a large, hand-drawn map with simple drawings located at various international sites (i.e.: a sombrero for Mexico, a palm tree for Hawaii). Prepare

corresponding cards with the same drawings. Distribute the cards to children randomly. Read or make up a simple story about a child who knows friends and family who live in these locations. When you point to a location on the map, have the child with the corresponding card come up and tape the image on.

POINT: *Discuss that small families can live all over the world, and that God's family DOES live all over the world. There are children of God in every country on earth.*

- Have three volunteers come up to use handbells. Explain that the handbells are part of the "Handbell Family." They are all different. They look different, and sound different. But still they are a family. Have children ring the bells individually (prior to this activity, ensure that the three bells chosen harmonize to make a simple chord). Then have them ring the bells at the same time. Retrieve the bells.

POINT: *Point out how pretty it sounded when they all rang the bells at the same time. Discuss how the bells sounded nice on their own, but sounded even better together. When families work together, like the Handbell Family, it's nicer! It's also a beautiful thing when the family of God works together. This is called unity, and we should always try to have unity in our family.*

- Have children officially "adopt" a stuffed animal or Webkinz animal into your classroom (if you have an animal you already use as a puppet or mascot, officially "adopt" him or her with a certificate and simple "ceremony").

POINT: *Discuss how we are adopted sons and daughters of God. This means that even though God isn't our earthly father, He is our heavenly father who has adopted us. Draw the parallel for children between God's adoption and the adoption of our animal. Also distinguish between an earthly father and our heavenly Father.*

Wrap-Ups (end)

- Have children form two teams of even numbers. Find a large area to play this game of "Family Hide & Seek." Choose two team "captains" and send other children off to hide (make sure they know where boundaries are). The team captains will go off in different directions, searching for classmates. When they find a classmate, the children join hands (now members of the same "family") and race off to find more family members.

POINT: *Discuss how families stick together (and how the family of God sticks together), discuss how family members do things for each other, defend each other, look out for each other and stand up for each other*

- Have children examine a box of pencil crayons that are well-used. Discuss how some are short, some are tall. Some are older, some are newer. Some look nicer, some look less nice. Ask them about their favorite colors, etc.

POINT: *Discuss how God loves all members of His family equally. He has no favorites. He likes tall ones, short ones, ones that look nice and those that don't. He likes ones that are old, and those that are new. In the family of God, just like in your family, you're loved no matter what!*

LESSON 2: JESUS LOVES THE WORLD



OBJECTIVE:

In this lesson, children will learn that just as God loves His family (the family of God), He also loves those who are not yet in His family. In fact, God loves the entire world and wants us to love “all the children of the world” too.

Scripture References: John 3:16, Romans 5:8



ACTIVITIES:

Hooks (engage)

- Show children videos of children around the world (there are videos from all continents but Antarctica; if you show them all, it will take about 14 minutes). You may choose to put all the names of the continents in a hat (Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Antarctica, Europe, Australia) and draw them one at a time, showing a video after each draw.
 - Australia: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QkF1tFcHeE&feature=channel>
 - Japan: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_8lmmS-RwIA&feature=channel
 - Egypt: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RLRZjuzCqjI&feature=channel>
 - France: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2jJe_MTBgc&feature=related
 - Ghana: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cm44xnXlJro&feature=channel>
 - Puerto Rico: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jul_MosgUwmo&feature=channel
 - Mexico: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Chgo1uE5vro&playnext=1&videos=2lFOtmkk3qs&feature=mfu_in_order

POINT: Children will see that there are children just like them in other countries, who may live differently than they do. God loves us all, no matter how we live or what our house looks like, if we're poor or rich, etc.
- Have children explore an artifact box you bring. Include in it items from various cultures. Explain what they are, what they're used for and where they come from.

POINT: Explain to children that toys, dishes, clothes, etc. are different all over the world, but that God loves us all. We love others even though we are different.
- Hide a variety of “little people” (i.e.: plastic figurines, action figures, toys, etc.) all over the room. Send children off to search for these figures. When they find them, they are to bring them to a pre-determined table or area.

POINT: Discuss the figures. They all look different. Some are older. Some are

attractive. Some are a little beat up. Some look silly. But if these were all different people in real life, which ones would God love? All of them, of course!

Main Activities (enlighten)

- Have children use plastic food to show you their favorite meal. Then show children a limited amount of rice and beans. This is a standard meal in many nations. Most people in the world don't have all the nice food, toys, etc. that we have.
POINT: *Discuss our level of comfort in North America. God loves us, but He also wants us to realize that we are blessed with so much so we can give much. Others in the world don't have all the nice food, toys, clothes and houses we do. We must be careful to be thankful, to give back as much as we can, and to always remember that God loves everyone, no matter their wealth or status.*
- Have children sing "Jesus Loves the Little Children." Learn the words first by using a rebus poster of the lyrics. Tape paper or felt images representing the words "loves," "children," "world," "red," "yellow," "black" and "white" to a board or poster as you learn the lyrics. Distribute the images to children and let them come up at the appropriate time as you learn the lyrics.
POINT: *Besides helping children learn this popular Sunday School song, images will help them solidify the point of the song in their minds. Discuss what is meant by "red/yellow/black/white" children, as some kids may not understand. Remind children that God loves us ALL.*
- Have children listen as you read a story about God's love. A good book is "The Locked In Friend" by Jane L. Fryar that talks about God's love for those who are small, weak and even scared. If you don't have a book you feel is appropriate, you can read the story of Jesus welcoming children to himself in the New Testament.
POINT: *Discuss God's love for us, and discuss His love for others. Even if we are children, God loves us just the same as adults. Furthermore, because we say we love God, we are also called to love others, no matter what they look like, dress like, etc. We should love everyone, even if they seem weak, small or even scared.*

Wrap-Ups (end)

- Cut various red pieces from a variety of sources (magazines, books, cardstock, construction paper, even fabric). They can be various sizes and various shades of red. Lightly trace a large heart-shaped outline on a piece of Bristol Board. Have children come, one at a time to glue a red piece on the outline. Name and pray for a different country each time they glue a piece on.
POINT: *Help children understand how many countries and children there are around the world. Remind them that God loves all of us and we need to pray for children in all countries to know Jesus.*
- Have children play along with instruments and songs of other nations. Play praise & worship songs if possible.
POINT: *Remind children that different languages are spoken all over the world, and that even the praise and worship songs are different. Still, children of God praise Him all over the earth. We can be thankful and excited that we are part of such a huge family!*

LESSON 3: REACHING THE WORLD



OBJECTIVE:

In this lesson, children will learn that it is our responsibility to reach the world and tell them of God's love and His plan of salvation that can take us to heaven forever. In this lesson, children will learn of God's love for everyone, no matter their appearance, etc.

Scripture References: Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19



ACTIVITIES:

Hooks (engage)

- Show children flags from all over the world (either electronically on a computer, or printed out). Discuss what flags are designed for (they're an image all citizens can relate to). Have children create a "Christian" flag of their own, either as a group or as individuals. Discuss what images we'd put on a flag to represent Jesus and the Bible.
POINT: *Discuss the idea that we are not "of this world," meaning we are not just part of a country. We are part of God's family. When we take truth to the world, we must show them what being a real Christian is all about. We don't have a flag to wave, but people see what we believe in just the same.*
- Have children play a fishing game. Line a blue tote with foil and place fish with paper clips attached to their nose on the bottom. Give children fishing poles with magnets. They have 10 seconds each turn to catch as many fish as they can. Each fish counts for one point.
POINT: *Discuss Matthew 4:19 with children ("I will make you fishers of men."). Talk about what "fishers of men" do.*
- Have children sing "I Will Make You Fishers of Men" with actions (i.e.: cast a fishing pole) and instruments.
POINT: *Have children become even more familiar with Matthew 4:19 and the concept of being "fishers of men."*

Main Activities (enlighten)

- Have one child leave the room with another adult. The child should listen to an iPod or something similar (have their ears plugged). Discuss with the other children in the room that the missing child represents a child in a faraway country. Give the children a wrapped gift marked “The Gospel.” Discuss that while we can share the Gospel here, we can’t share it with the child outside the door. How would we get it to him or her? We could try yelling, but they live faraway and can’t hear us. We could try throwing it, but it would probably never make it. The only way to get the Gospel to the other child is to take it.

Adapted from an activity of Nancy Keith’s, found on childrensministry.com.

POINT: *Help children understand that we can’t just sit in our own house and our own church, comfortable and insensitive to those who are without the Gospel. We must take the gift of the Gospel to others, whether they live across the world, or across the street.*

- Have children explore a globe. Name some countries. Point out the ones the children learned about in the videos last week. Have children place their hands on the globe and pray for all the people in the world who don’t know Jesus.

POINT: *Get children comfortable with the idea of praying for other peoples, and help them understand that though we are lucky, other people in the world don’t know Jesus like we do and need prayer so that they may know about God and His love for them.*

- Have children play “Blob” in a large open area or outside. One child volunteers to be “the Blob.” The Blob begins chasing other children. When someone is touched by the Blob, they become a part, joining hands with the original Blob. The Blob continues growing and chasing other kids until everyone is part of the Blob.

POINT: *Discuss the idea of working as a team to reach the world. It’s more fun, and it’s what God intends. The church must join hands with each other, and reach for others by working as one. This is called unity.*

Wrap-Ups (end)

- Have children each dip one hand in a paint color of their choice. Have them press their hand onto a fabric banner. Hang the banner. You may write on it or above it “We will reach!”

POINT: *Discuss what the children have made. Talk about what it means to reach for unsaved people. Talk about why we should reach. Discuss how reaching takes work (we must use our hands, actually do something, etc.) and how reaching is our responsibility.*

- Have children use a rainstick (make a homemade one out of a wrapping paper tube, two capped ends and some beans), listening to the sounds it makes. Discuss some of the African and Indian cultures that use rainsticks.

POINT: *Discuss the beautiful sound of rain falling. Discuss how we can listen to God just as we can listen to natural sounds. God will help direct our life if we will listen to Him and the people He has put in our lives to help guide us. Next week we will begin learning about missionaries, people who listen to God and are willing to follow Him.*

LESSON 4: WHAT'S A MISSIONARY?



OBJECTIVE:

In this lesson, children will look at our organization's missionaries. They will discover what a missionary is, who our missionaries are, and what our missionaries do.

Scripture References: Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8

ACTIVITIES:



Hooks (engage)

- Have children blow up balloons and hold them without tying them off (do this for them if you feel uneasy about any children doing this on their own). One by one, or as a group, have children release their balloons. They must go and stand on the spot where their balloon lands.
POINT: Discuss how missionaries leave their hometown (like the balloon left its original spot) and go where God directs them. Sometimes they don't go very far from home (like some children's balloons), but sometimes they go very, very far away (like other balloons). Discuss how they don't always know where they'll be going, but they trust God to take them there.
- Have children try saying "Praise the Lord!" or a common phrase in a variety of foreign languages.
POINT: Discuss the difficulty missionaries would face if the people of their nation did not speak English. Discuss how missionaries learn foreign languages, use interpreters, etc. Remind kids that God understands praises in every language on earth!
- Have children try tortillas or another simple foreign food. Make sure you have no allergies to the ingredients.
POINT: Discuss what missionaries are. Discuss how they adapt to new food, new languages, new ways of transportation. Would it be difficult to "adjust?" Help students understand how missionaries adapt and learn new things in order to fit in with the people they are trying to reach.

Main Activities (enlighten)

- Have children put on a puppet show (use whatever puppets you have available, or make simple stick puppets) describing what missionaries do. If they aren't able to come up with ideas on their own, put papers into a hat that list missionary activities (i.e.: preaching, baptizing, teaching at a Bible school, traveling, writing tracts, etc.) and draw them for different pairs or groups to perform. Children may also role play for this activity.

POINT: *Discuss what missionaries do on the field. They don't just preach. They visit, help when disaster strikes, print materials and teach students.*

- Have children "pack a suitcase" (draw items on a large Bristol Board folder in half) of items a missionary would take with them to the field. If you didn't do the above activity, discuss a missionary's duties as you help children imagine what a missionary would need (don't be too "practical;" allow children to include large items in the suitcase, or items that a missionary might actually get on the field).

POINT: *Help children understand a missionary's duties, as well as help them become familiar with the idea of missionaries traveling to foreign countries.*

- Have children go on a journey. Using imagination and simple props you have, help children "pack their things" and "get on a plane" to travel to Africa, where Sunday School is often held under a large tree. If you are able to go outside and sing some songs under a large tree, do it!

POINT: *As you guide children on this brief tour around the world, show them music and props that will help them visualize what a missionary's Sunday might be like. When you are finished, ask them how Sunday School in Africa is different from Sunday School here.*

Wrap-Ups (end)

- Have children play "Missionary Match." Make two sets of cards with missionary names, faces (and countries) on one side. Play "Memory" using these cards, reading the names and countries when children choose cards.

POINT: *Help children become familiar with the missionaries in our fellowship who give their day-to-day lives to further the gospel.*

- Have children look at a poster of our Foreign Missions Family.

POINT: *Discuss the people on the poster, noting how many families there are, and how some people sometimes go on short trips to help our missionaries. Talk about why missionaries are heroes.*

LESSON 5: I CAN BE A MISSIONARY



OBJECTIVE:

In this lesson, children will learn that they can be a missionary. They will learn that it is possible to be a missionary overseas, but they will also learn that we need “home missionaries” right here in our city and province.

Scripture References: Luke 4:18, Romans 1:16



ACTIVITIES:

Hooks (engage)

- Put up laminated “Community Pieces” (i.e.: an image of a fire station, park, school, hospital, etc.) horizontally on the wall in a long line. Attach a long piece of paper underneath (string several together if long paper is not available, or put one piece of paper under each image). Allow children to use Bingo stampers to stamp under places they frequent.
POINT: *Discuss with children the multiple places they go. Discuss all the people they see daily/weekly, etc. Discuss their need for God. Draw connections between the people they see often and their job as a missionary in their city.*
- Have children dress up as business men and women. Give them briefcases to carry, suit jackets to wear, pens and fancy folders, even cell phones, etc.
POINT: *Discuss the idea of being an ambassador, who tells people in other countries something about their own country. Tell children that we are heaven’s ambassadors. If our job is to tell others about heaven, what information is important to relay?*
- Have children toss a ball between themselves in a circle. Before they toss the ball, they must say one nice thing about the person they intend to throw to. Give them some examples so they have an idea of what to say.
POINT: *Help children understand that the best way to make friends and show God’s love is to be kind. We, as God’s ambassadors, should be the kindest people our community knows. Kind words are a wonderful thing!*

Main Activities (enlighten)

- Have children decorate a 2D foam shoe with jewels/sticky shapes/glitter glue, etc. Tie a tag on the shoe with Romans 10:15 inscribed (“How beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace”).
POINT: *Discuss the verse, and how the verse gives no indication of “how far” those feet have to go. Some missionaries go overseas, but some go next door, and both “types” of missionaries are needed.*
- Have children toss bean bags or soft balls at a target. Allow them a few tries to hit the target.
POINT: *Discuss how being a missionary is a choice. God commands us all to reach those around us, but we have to choose if we will follow Him or not. When we point ourselves in Jesus’ direction and follow Him (keep Him as our target), we will always hit our target because He will help us do His will. Discuss how God will help us if we’ll let Him “toss” us in the right direction.*
- Prepare a grid with two columns (“Home Missionary” and “Foreign Missionary”) and a number of rows with different descriptors of missionaries (i.e.: “gets in a plane,” “learns a new language,” “doesn’t leave home,” etc). Make some descriptors appropriate for “Home Missionaries” and others more specific to “Foreign Missionaries.” Go through the list with children. Have them put stickers in the appropriate boxes, depending on whether they feel the descriptor matches “Foreign Missionary,” “Home Missionary,” or both.
POINT: *Distinguish between a home missionary and a foreign missionary. Ask if both are important, and whether God values one more than the other. Ask kids which kind of missionary they would most like to be.*

Wrap-Ups (end)

- Have children work with you and the whole class (or work in two groups if your class is very independent) to write a poem about loving/reaching our city, or being a missionary. Let their creative juices flow, and don’t be too concerned about rhyme. Get the idea of the poem across. Write it on large paper or Bristol Board and let the children illustrate the poster when the class is done writing.
POINT: *Get children thinking on their own about what they can do in their city as a home missionary. Putting it in writing and illustrating a poem simply makes this activity more memorable.*
- Have children play an “I Can be a Missionary” board game. Create a simple board game, or lay out squares on the floor and let children be the pieces. Using a die, allow children to move across the board. Once children have moved, ask them a simple T/F question about missionaries (i.e.: “Missionaries have to live in far-away countries.”). If they answer correctly, they stay where they are. If they answer incorrectly, they move back one space.
POINT: *Review pertinent facts about missionaries.*