

PREPARING MISSION PROJECTS FOR KIDS

How children can get involved in missions

Toolbox III

Suggested Session Length: 60 minutes

PowerPoint Available: "Toolbox III: Preparing Mission Projects for Kids"

Audience: Experienced preschool and elementary DL volunteers (Lead Teachers, Discover Time Leaders, and Shepherds)

General Topic: Ways to involve kids in missions through prayer, giving, and service.

Slide 1: Title

Slide 2: An Invitation to Kingdom Work

When we make it possible for our students to be part of mission work, we are inviting them to much more than just a project, we are giving them the opportunity to be involved in Kingdom work.

Slide 3: Establishing the Need

Before we can do the work of missions, we need to understand the need for missions.
Do your students understand the need for missions?

The Wordless Book helps us clearly present the need:

All people have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) and need a Savior.

Jesus is the only way (John 14:6) for each person in the world (John 3:16) to be saved.

People around the world need to hear this Good News! In fact, Jesus has commanded us to share this Good News (Matthew 28:18-20).

That is why we care about mission work.

Slide 4: Getting Involved

There are three ways we can involve our students in God's work around the world: Pray, Give, and Go.

These three ways to participate are woven into the quarterly Discovery Land mission lessons. These quarterly mission lessons are 15-minute opportunities for students to learn about a specific country, organization, or mission project. The rest of this training session will unpack some activities and ideas that you will often see woven into these quarterly mission lessons.

Training idea: If time allows, take a few minutes to read over this quarter's mission lesson together. If leaders have questions about this resource, now is a good time to address them.

Slide 5: Pray

We believe that the Holy Spirit uses kids' prayers to open doors around the world. What an incredible privilege it is to be used by God to teach kids to pray for missions!

Here are a few ways you can effectively teach kids how to pray for missions:

- Be proactive and ask missionaries/International Workers for specific prayer requests. Ask them to provide requests that are appropriate for children. Here is an example: "Please send five ways our kids can pray specifically for your ministry. Please include the first names of people (include age and need), needs for your church and/or ministry, personal requests for your family, and needs in your community."
- When talking about prayer requests with children, use props so children can visualize the prayer needs (example: hold up a cross to demonstrate the need for the Gospel message, hold up a Bible when praying for people who teach or translate God's Word, hold up a first aid kit to represent safety, etc.)
- When you witness God answering prayer, celebrate with your students! Make sure children hear testimonies of answered prayer. This will motivate them to pray faithfully and help them see God at work.
- To help kids watch God working, create an "answered prayer wall." If you are praying for a specific location or person, ask for weekly prayer requests and updates. Update the wall weekly with these updates and make sure students see the updates (we suggest highlighting the updates during your worship time).
- Create practical take-home tools to remind students to pray faithfully:
 - Create a bookmark that lists the requests.
 - Tie a piece of string around students' wrists to serve as a reminder to pray.
 - Hand out stones to students and have them carry them around for the quarter as a reminder to pray. At the end of the quarter, have a stone painting party and turn the stones into a beautiful display that shows how your students prayed.

***Training idea:** Pick one of the above activities and do it as a group.*

Slide 6: Give

When we think about *giving* to missions, we often think only of giving financially. That is a very important part of giving but is not the *only* way that we can give. We can also encourage students to give their time and to give encouragement.

Let's start with thinking about how students can give money.

Why should we even ask kids to give money? They don't have very much!

We ask kids to give money because:

- 1) It's a heart issue addressed in Scripture. We want to help our kids grow into cheerful givers. When we give them the opportunity to give money, we give them the opportunity to grow in generosity and faith.
- 2) God multiplies what we give!
- 3) Through giving they are participating in God's work. They may never see the results of their giving on this side of eternity...but when we are all together in heaven, they will see how God used what they gave to bring more people to Himself!

Training idea: Read Luke 21:1-4, Mark 12:41-44, and 2 Corinthians 9. Consider these verses, discuss their implications, and pray that the children in your ministry will be faithful, cheerful givers.

Kids can also give their time to missions. There are so many things that steal time away from each of us.

Training idea: Create a list of the things that steal your time. Create a list of the things that steal your students' time. Consider how God might be challenging you to give your time differently. Keep these lists for future illustrations as you teach your students.

How kids spend their time is largely dependent on their parents. This is why we must share the urgency of mission work with parents, too! One way to do this is to invite parents to be part of a special mission team - they can help prepare the quarterly mission lesson, maybe even teach the lesson, and they can pray for the missionaries your church supports.

Finally, kids are great at giving encouragement! Find ways for them to encourage missionaries/International Workers. You can send cards, pictures, and emails. You could take pictures or videos. You could send gifts or prepare gifts for missionaries who are coming to visit your church.

Training idea: Have leaders create lists of missionaries/mission organizations that are connected to their church. Ask them to consider specific ways that they could equip their students to encourage these people. Share as a group after people have brainstormed some options.

Slide 7: Go

When we say "Go!", we mean more than international missions! "Go" simply means going out and living and sharing the Gospel.

It is very important to do missions locally. People all over the world need Jesus, and so do your neighbors. To equip kids to "Go" and do mission work in their own city or town, consider the following questions:

- 1) Where is your city spiritually? What kind of worldviews, religions, and values do you see in your community?
- 2) What are some big "felt needs" in your community? This will be the practical way you can serve your community, which will also give you the opportunity to share Jesus.

With your answers to these questions, you can prepare a local mission project for your students.

Here are some examples of how this could look:

- If you have a large refugee population in your community, consider both their spiritual needs and "felt needs." If the felt need is clothing for children, your students could gather clothes for these children and decorate cards that invite them to your church's midweek or Sunday program. Attach the cards to the boxes of clothes.
- If your city has food pantries or meal ministries, you could partner with them by doing a food drive. As students collect food, have them ask their friends and neighbors to pray for the people who will receive this food.

Be creative, and don't be afraid to ask! This is a great way to get involved in your community and to share the hope of Christ with many people.

Training idea: Take time to come up with some ways you could serve your own city. Consider how you can weave the Gospel into your service.

When we say “Go”, we also mean globally!

Did you know that most missionaries were called to missions before the age of 12? God has intentionally designed some people with a very specific love for the world and a calling to missions. These people are eager to take a risk for Jesus in a different culture.

We have the privilege and responsibility to equip these children as they recognize and obey this calling. Here are some ways you can weave this into your ministry:

- Be intentional to make missions a part of the DNA of your ministry rather than just a special event. You can do this by hanging the flag of the country you’re studying in a visible place, by asking your worship leaders to pray for missions with your students weekly, and by honoring missionaries/International Workers who visit your church.
- Talk often about how God calls people to missions. Children need to understand that some people go into missions as a full-time professional occupation. Here’s one way you could phrase this when talking about missions: “If you feel like God is calling you to ‘Go!’, you should be willing to say ‘I’ll Go!’. Just like being a doctor, teacher, pilot, or accountant... being a missionary/International Worker is a real profession.”
- If a child shares with you that they sense God calling them to missions, take it seriously and make it a big deal. Encourage and equip these children by informing your Senior Pastor or Missions Pastor.
- If you have a mission wall, consider highlighting those who are obeying God’s call to missions.
- When missionaries visit your church, connect them with kids who are called to missions. Find ways for them to meet, or even make it possible for missionaries to stay at those kids’ homes!
- Give kids opportunities to “adopt a missionary” - give them the opportunity to pray for a specific person or team, send care packages, and talk with them online. As you create these opportunities, ask missionaries for specific requests or needs that your students could help provide.

Training idea: Take some time to make a list of kids in your ministry who have expressed that they sense God calling them to missions. Have you given them opportunities to explore this calling? What are some ways you could help them grow and engage in missions now?

Slide 8: Hosting an International Worker

As we teach our children about missions, it's important that we provide them with opportunities to hear from International Workers (missionaries) and let them see how God is working in the world today!

Some International Workers have really incredible ministry stories to share but are not used to teaching children. It is our responsibility to help them prepare a presentation that is developmentally appropriate and engaging for kids, so that our students can really learn and understand.

We have created a resource for you to use when hosting an International Worker. Let's look at it together.

Training idea: Hand out the *International Workers Presentation for Kids* resource and walk through the resource as a group. Remind leaders to clearly communicate with the International Worker about what your church will provide and what the International Worker should prepare.

Slide 9: Conclusion

Isn't it a wonderful gift that God invites us into His Kingdom work? And what a privilege we have to include children in this work!

As we conclude our time together, let's pray for our missionaries/International Workers, the children God is currently calling to missions, and the people who will hear the Good News through each of these individuals.

Conclude in prayer.