

Christmas in August **TIMELINE**



Ways to Use “Christmas in August Timeline:”

Guessing Game:

Copy the dates and descriptions back-to-back. Review the facts. Challenge children to put the dates in order and recall what happened during each year.

Matching Game:

Copy the dates and descriptions separately. Place the dates face-up on a table. Place the descriptions face-down. Children take turns choosing a date card and a description card. (Matching cards are printed in the same color.)



1927



Elizabeth Ellyson Wiley was a missionary to China. When she was in the United States she spoke at First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, Virginia. Mrs. Wiley told the church about children in China whose mothers worked as servants. Mrs. Wiley wanted those children to know the joy of Christmas. Mrs. Via, who worked with the Sunbeam Band at First Baptist Church of Charlottesville, volunteered to lead her children's group to collect gifts for the Chinese children. That year, 100 gifts were collected and mailed to China.



1937



During World War II, the gifts from First Baptist Church of Charlottesville were shipped to China, but they never arrived. No one knows what really happened. The gifts may have been on a ship that sank in the ocean.



1938



The year after the gifts were lost, the Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) in Virginia decided to only send gifts to missionaries who worked in North America. They thought it was unwise to send gifts to China during the war.



1949



A WMU magazine for children titled *World Comrades* published a story called “A Christmas Tree in August” about a Virginia church’s Sunbeam group. That same month, a WMU magazine for young women gave groups the idea of sending warm clothing to other countries. If the packages were mailed during August or September, the magazine said, they would arrive in time for winter.



1950



Both WMU magazines described a project called “Christmas in August.” The first year, they suggested sending gifts to Japan. After that, the magazines encouraged groups to send gifts to “home” missionaries. “Home” missionaries are also called “North American” missionaries.



1952



Royal Service, WMU's magazine for adult women, asked women to help young people collect gifts for Christmas in August[®].



2024



Today, WMU and the North American Mission Board (NAMB) work together to choose missionaries who will receive Christmas in August[®] gifts. This partnership began several years ago and continues today. Selected missionaries provide a list of needed items, and churches choose which items they are able to send. Missionaries then use the items as the means by which they share the good news about Jesus with the people they serve.

