



FOUNDATIONS OF CHILDREN'S MISSIONS DISCIPLESHIP

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

APPLYING AIMS AND OBJECTIVES TO TEACHING CHILDREN

Children will explore with growing understanding the nature and implications of the gospel and God's missions purpose and will respond in personal commitment and obedience.

1. Know the truth of the gospel and God's missions purpose, biblically and historically.
 - Participating in projects and activities that describe God's love for all people and His plan for saving them
 - Listening to accounts of God's love for all people and His plan for saving them
 - Observing persons of other races and nationalities whose lives reflect God's love
 - Learning accounts from the Bible of God's love for all people and His plan for saving them
 - Discovering information about the lives of people who have worked to help fulfill God's missions purpose
 - Hearing how praying and giving have helped fulfill God's missions purpose
2. Understand ways God's missions purpose is being fulfilled in contemporary settings.
 - Studying about people who are working to help fulfill God's missions purpose
 - Discovering information about contemporary missions
 - Visiting mission points and reporting how people are serving God today
 - Discovering information about Christians of other races and nationalities
 - Hearing how praying and giving money help fulfill God's missions purpose
3. Personalize the implications of God's missions purpose.
 - Learning how missionaries have advanced the cause of missions
 - Participating in projects and activities that tell about God's care and His love for all people
 - Evaluating information about other cultures, other religious groups, and non-Christians
 - Determining needs of people and ways Christians can help meet these needs.
 - Discussing impressions and feelings about a personal responsibility in missions
 - Learning ways biblical truths about missions can be expressed today
 - Determining how to be personally involved in praying and giving money to help fulfill God's missions purpose
4. Respond in personal commitment and obedience.
 - Participating in projects to help meet the needs of others
 - Expressing God's love through daily living
 - Expressing a willingness to share God's love through giving to help support missions
 - Expressing a willingness to share God's love through praying for missions
 - Sharing the Christian message with non-Christians
 - Developing a missions lifestyle

SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS FOR THE MISSIONS DISCIPLESHIP OF CHILDREN

I. The Biblical and Theological Basis of Missions

The Old Testament

- God is the Creator of all people. He created all people in His image. God loves all people. God loves us.
- Every person has the capacity to sin, which is doing things that are not pleasing to God. In spite of the sin of a person, God loves the person.
- Because of God's love for all people, He provided a way for people to be forgiven of their sin. God wants people to respond to His love for them and be forgiven of their sin.

The New Testament

- God has one plan for forgiving people of their sin: sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Jesus came into the world to show us how much God loves us. Stories about the birth, childhood, and ministry of Jesus help us understand God's reason for sending His Son to live on earth.
- Jesus is a real person. He understands how we are because He was once human. While He was on earth, He taught His disciples how to tell others about Him and how to minister to other people and to live by His example. We learn the importance of living our lives with Jesus as our example.
- Jesus loved all people in all situations and circumstances. Because of this love for all people, Jesus ministered to others and served them. He helped people who were hungry, those who were sick, and those with other physical needs. Jesus forgave people who did wrong. He taught people how to live. He was an example.
- Jesus taught that sin is doing something wrong, thinking wrong thoughts, and having wrong attitudes; sin is anything that displeases God. Sin is what separates us from God.
- Jesus taught that all people are equal, regardless of race, creed, or social status. Jesus treated all people equally.
- In the Great Commission, Jesus told His disciples what He expected them to do. This is what Jesus expects us to do today just as He expected it of His disciples.
- A Christian is a person who has accepted Jesus as her Savior. She has asked Jesus to forgive her sin and to guide her life.
- The Church is made up of Christians. God uses these Christians to tell others about His love for them.
- The mission of the church is to encourage and help all people to become followers of Jesus. Christians follow Jesus' example as they witness and minister to others.

II. The Historical Development of Christian Missions

Missions began in the heart of God. The Bible is the account of God's redeeming love for all people.

Missions in the Bible

- A part of God's missionary plan includes the calling out and sending forth of missionaries. Paul was a missionary called by God to go to other areas of the world to tell the Good News of Jesus.
- Early missionaries in the Bible were Paul, Barnabas, and Silas. Missionaries who have lived since then include people such as William Carey, the Judsons, and Lottie Moon.
- People participated in missions and supported missions and missionaries.

Baptist Beginnings in Missions

- William Carey, the Judsons, Lottie Moon, and others were Baptist missionaries.
- The organizing of the Southern Baptist Convention, the Home Mission Board (North American Mission Board), and the Foreign Mission Board (International Mission Board) were important to the missions cause.
- People such as Annie Armstrong, Luther Rice, and other Baptists were instrumental in promoting mission support among Baptists.

III. The Contemporary World Environment of the Christian Mission

World and National Conditions and Trends Affecting Missions

- Individuals, families, and communities in the world experience poverty and wealth. Their social and cultural customs may differ. They may practice differing religious beliefs and practices.
- Conditions in the contemporary world, such as education, religious persecution, population increases, medical problems, affluence, inadequate food supply/distribution, and war affect the way we share the gospel.
- The environment in which people live affects their response to the gospel.

Other Religions

- People who ascribe to other religions may believe differently in these areas: a supreme being, salvation, ways to worship, the Scriptures, life after death.
- People who are part of non-Christian religions respond differently to the gospel.

IV. Christian Missions in the Contemporary World

Baptist Missions

- Church members participate in ministry and volunteer missions.
- Missions work is carried out in the church, association, state, nation, and world efforts of Baptists
- Prayer, giving, and ministry to missionaries and their families are ways to support missions.
- Career missionaries, short-term missionaries, and volunteers work together to share the gospel in the world.
- God gives a special call to some people to become career missionaries.
- Missionaries use many job skills in their missions involvement. Many careers can be used in missions.
- Some other ways to be involved in missions include local missions; WMU opportunities such as Christian Women's Job Corps and Project HELP; and state partnerships.
- Missions efforts include both North American and international missions. The spreading of the gospel is happening in many different cultural settings.
- God calls both women and men into missions. Both women and men have important contributions to make in missions in varied career settings.

Missions Work of Other Christian Groups

- Christian groups, other than Baptists, are involved in missions work.
- Baptist missionaries and missionaries from other Christian groups are working together in a joint effort to spread the gospel.

V. Spiritual Development

Accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

- Our relationship with Jesus begins by thinking of Him as a friend and helper.
- We have a growing sense of what is right and wrong. We begin to recognize sin as wrongdoing against God and begin to feel the need of a Savior.
- While there is no specific age of accountability, many persons make a personal commitment to Christ as Savior and Lord during the childhood years.
- God's love is for all people.
- Accepting that love and accepting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is a decision that each person must make for herself/himself.
- While spiritual growth occurs before this initial experience, following a decision to accept Christ as Savior and Lord, a person should be disciplined and led through a period of great spiritual growth.

Growing in One's Relationship to Christ

Prayer

- Prayer is communication with God.
- We learn to pray as significant adults model prayer for us.
- Prayer involves thanking God and talking to Him about things that concern us.
- God forgives our sin when we ask His forgiveness.
- As we learn to be concerned for others, we demonstrate this concern by praying for them.
- We learn to pray not only for those who are geographically close, but also for people, missionaries, and missions causes around the world.
- A part of prayer is listening to God.
- We can pray anytime and anywhere.

Bible Study

- The Bible is a book of true stories and events that can relate to our everyday lives.
- The Bible is a guidebook for Christians to follow.
- Reading the Bible daily is an important element of the Christian's life. We often start and develop this habit through the example of others.
- The Bible gives us the personal opportunity and responsibility for telling others about Jesus and His love for them.

Stewardship of Life

- Everything comes from God.
- God is the maker/creator of everything.
- It is important to give back to God a part of our material possessions. We often learn this through the example of others such as parents, friends, and helpers in the church.
- As we make our Christian commitment, we begin to understand that it is important for us personally to tell others about Jesus.
- A part of showing God's love is helping others in need. We learn that helping those in need is a way to tell others about Jesus. Some persons in the church go to different places in the world to tell people about Jesus.

CHILDREN AS LEARNERS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

Children grow and mature at different rates in the areas of physical, cognitive, moral-spiritual, social, and emotional development. Many times, these areas of growth overlap. The following lists include general stages of development for children. The following list is based on the developmental stages of: Younger Children (grades 1 and 2), Middle Children (grades 3 and 4), and Older Children (grades 5 and 6).

Younger Children

Physical

- Do not yet have good eye-hand coordination.
- Smaller muscles are beginning to develop.
- Eyes have not yet fully developed.
- Like to use their hands, but still use their whole body when doing most things.
- Difficulty sitting still for long periods without fidgeting.
- Tire easily and need about eleven hours of sleep in each twenty-four-hour period.
- Need parental assistance in taking care of bodily needs.

Cognitive

- Beginning to use actual experience to interpret vicarious experiences.
- Capable of following specific directions.
- Become deeply absorbed in tasks and do not always respond promptly.
- Enjoy reading alone, but still want adults to read to them.
- Not able to think abstractly.
- Are perfectionists; try hard to make their work just right.
- Beginning to evaluate their own conduct by the standards of others.
- Have good memories.
- Enjoy dramatic play and other things that call for imagination and creativity.
- Beginning to realize the value of money.

Moral-Spiritual

- Show a concern for what is right and wrong.
- Want to be sure they are right.
- Show some capability for taking some responsibility for their own behavior.
- Understanding of truthfulness and honesty is still vague.
- Trying to reason and form conclusions about God, how He made the world and how He works in His world.
- Interested in God's wonders in nature.
- Think of Jesus as a friend and helper.
- Like to have adults use the Bible with them (playing Bible games, finding Bible verses, hearing Bible stories, memorizing Bible verses).
- Prayers are often mechanical—said from force of habit rather than sincerely.
- Attitudes and appreciations are developing slowly.

Social

- Sensitive to what others think of them.
- Think of themselves as persons in society.
- Often fearful that they will not be successful and win approval.
- Self-critical—not as likely to blame others for their failures.

- Fight with words.
- Want to please the teacher, but also want approval of the group.
- Very likely to brag and exaggerate things.
- Self-centered and egotistic.
- Talkative and like to talk about themselves.
- Tendency to take group problems to the teacher for approval of their opinions.

Emotional

- Sensitive about criticism from adults.
- Cry easily if scolded.
- Trying to be independent, yet afraid they will make mistakes.
- Frequently go to adults for assurance before undertaking their work.
- Tend to avoid new or difficult situations.
- Inclined to be jealous of other members of their family.
- Have fears of imaginary creatures, strange people, being deserted by parents.
- Not too inclined to outbursts of temper, but may fight and quarrel with peer group.
- Need opportunities to succeed in challenging situations.

Middle Children

Physical

- Eye-hand contact is much improved.
- Girls are beginning to forge ahead of boys in growth.
- Among the boys the physical changes are less marked than in girls.
- Eyes are ready for close work.
- Beginning to sketch in drawing.
- Active and reaching a degree of balance and adaptation in their world.
- In a skill development period.
- Aware of sex; questions of masculinity are prominent.
- Prize physical prowess.

Cognitive

- Wide discrepancies in their reading ability; they enjoy reading alone.
- Capable of prolonged interest—can work for long periods of time.
- Do not think abstractly.
- Have difficulty making decisions.
- Beginning to value money.
- Like to experiment and find out how things are made.
- Enjoy dramatization, but have more interest in acting than in the finished product.
- Like word play but are quite literal; metaphors may be taken literally.
- Do not understand all they hear or read; require objects and demonstrations.
- Can measure themselves against abstract ideals, such as strong, brave, and so forth.
- Able to judge their own performance by stable, external standards, and to compare their skills with those of their classmates.
- In the concrete operations period: they can classify, use symbols, separate, conserve, and reverse.
- Some may be entering the formal operations stage: they begin to think abstractly and logically without objects.

Moral-Spiritual

- Beginning to ask more serious questions about religion.
- Growing consciousness of themselves and sin.

- Beginning to feel the need of a Savior.
- Capable of experiences that involve feelings and thinking.
- Simultaneously integrating values from peers, parents, school, church, and television; values of peers are most important.
- Learn justice and injustice from peers; are concerned with problems of justice and injustice, especially when it concerns them.
- Believe in imminent justice; what you get is what you deserve.
- Faith in authority.
- Positive belief in God, but have spiritual questions they don't always feel free to ask.

Social

- Tend to dislike those of the opposite sex even though they may tease each other about boyfriends and girlfriends.
- Accept criticism better than before, but it still needs to be carefully phrased.
- Want blame to be apportioned fairly; they can accept blame.
- Eager to please and want to be liked.
- Hero worshipers.
- Skilled in the ways of peers, and spend as much time as possible with friends.
- Compete with siblings for parental attention.
- Beginning to develop altruism (selfless regard for the welfare of others).
- Thinking is guided more by feelings than by reasoning.
- Fascinated by space travel and space exploration, the world beneath the sea, and ecology.

Emotional

- Want to do things the right way and may be ashamed of being wrong.
- Have less concern about good and bad, but think in terms of right and wrong.
- Great talkers and need to be allowed to talk.
- Do not want to be babied.
- Moods change quickly.
- Form secret societies; rituals and magic have strong appeal.
- Seize on any idiosyncrasy of peers.
- Like the age they are, but emulate teen styles and preferences.
- Prize fairness.
- Seek, but test, imposed limits.

Older Children

Physical

- Increasingly able to use their small muscles.
- Have attained a good level of coordination and use of motor skills.
- Eager to make use of their abundant energy and rapidly developing physical skills.
- Need occasional periods of inactivity.
- Approaching puberty, with girls maturing more rapidly than boys.
- Eye-muscle development is complete.

Cognitive

- Make choices but may not follow through on those that require long-term action.
- Think for themselves about things within their experience.
- Some ability to express ideas, understand cause and effect, solve problems, reason, and plan.
- Capable of great concentration when interested and challenged.
- Think literally and do little abstract thinking.

- Learn quickly and are able to memorize easily.
- Employ imagination and creativity.
- Demonstrate great curiosity and a wide variety of interests.
- Learn through vicarious experiences as well as firsthand ones.
- Distinguish between fact and fiction.
- Some ability to discern time and space relationships, but are basically oriented to the here and now.

Moral-Spiritual

- Can learn accepted limits for behavior in their world.
- Easily influenced in their search for ideas and values to live by.
- Developing consciences and value systems.
- Capable of experiences that involve feelings, imagination, deep thought, and choice making.
- Formed concepts of their personal worth.
- Eager to find answers to questions with spiritual implications.
- Ready for spiritual development that can be tied in with their experiences in other facets of development.

Social

- Accept simple rules, organization, responsibility, and leader-follower roles in group activities.
- Attitudes toward social groups, institutions, and authority are still rudimentary.
- Recognize and appreciate individual differences among persons.
- Show an intensified perception of sex roles, identify more with their own sex, show divergent interests according to sex, and give evidence of changing attitudes toward the opposite sex.
- Deep need for the companionship and approval of their peers but continue to need adult approval and support.
- Capable of recognizing and respecting the needs and rights of others but are motivated primarily by self-centered interests.
- Operate with a degree of freedom and independence in a group.
- Can think and behave contrary to family influences that thwart their desire for independence and peer approval.

Emotional

- Beginning to learn to cope with success and failure.
- Enjoy trying to improve on their own achievements; may feel threatened by competition.
- Ready for increasing responsibility and opportunities for self-direction and independent thinking.
- Able to accept and work toward short-term goals.
- Succeed best in a climate of acceptance and encouragement but are easily discouraged.
- Feel deeply about their own experiences and can be sensitive to the feelings of others.
- Easy to influence emotionally.
- Self-concepts are developing, but often they are unable to describe their feelings about themselves.
- Capable of experiences that involve feelings, imagination, and deep thought.
- Can identify can cope with some of their emotion.

Application for Missions Discipleship

Children are curious, imaginative, and creative.

- They want to know about God, the universe, themselves, and the world around them.
- Their vivid imaginations make them able to project themselves into the experiences of others.
- Because they are creative, they learn about other people through art, drama, and music.

Children are developing learning skills.

- They like to use the basic skills of reading and writing. This enables them to read missions books and periodicals.
- They can write stories, take written tests, and make posters, maps, and charts.
- Their growing ability to concentrate not only helps them to memorize, but also enables them to accept study assignments that call for preparation and follow-through.

Children are increasing in their ability to think for themselves.

- They are developing a sense of guilt when they do wrong and are able to understand they can turn to God for help and forgiveness.
- They are developing the ability to reason, which helps them understand why we send missionaries.
- They are able to solve problems, which helps them find Christian solutions to situations involving persons of other races or cultures.
- They can study the missionary message of the Bible and adapt its principles to the modern world.
- Their developing ability to distinguish between fact and fiction helps them to find deep meaning in stories from the mission field.
- They are able to make choices.
- They should be given some opportunity to select books, activities, and ministry projects that appeal to their interests and abilities.

Children are developing a conscience.

- They feel a sense of responsibility to help meet the needs of others.
- This may be expressed through Christian witnessing, stewardship, and prayer.
- Ministry projects provide an avenue for expressing concern for others.

Children are developing a sense of individual worth.

- This helps them understand that they can be used of God in the missionary enterprise.

Children are discovering they live in an ever-enlarging world of persons and they are interrelated with them in many different ways.

- They are identifying themselves with various groups outside their family such as neighborhood groups, school groups, and church groups.
- They desire peer group acceptance.
- They are increasingly aware of the two sexes and are starting to identify with their own sex. This makes the club-type approach to teaching missions particularly desirable for the older children in this age bracket.

Children are able to recognize the needs and rights of others.

- They are developing a concept of themselves and others and are increasingly aware of individual differences. This helps them to realize that God loves all people and has a plan for their salvation.

- They are ready for learning that the only way one can express God's love is through loving persons.
- They are developing firm attitudes toward social, racial, and cultural groups. The study of missions can help them develop the right attitudes toward all persons.
- Children are capable of experiences that initiate feelings such as compassion, joy, and love. These feelings can provide motivation for participation in missions.

Children accept and work toward short-term goals.

- This enables them to participate in individual plans of advancement such as GA Journey, RA Trek, or Missions Expedition.

Children are easy to influence emotionally.

- This can be a helpful factor in teaching missions, but can be overworked in dedication and commitment appeals.
- Children need help in identifying and coping with their emotions.

METHODOLOGY

TEACHING CHILDREN

Sound methods of teaching children encourage meaningful participation by learners. Learners will be interested in the learning process when activities are directly related to their present interests and needs. Good teaching methods will include both teacher and pupil in the planning and choice of activities.

Learning opportunities for children should engage both mind and body, while also supporting the learning goals of the unit of study. As children grow older, unit content and activities should increase in depth and difficulty.

Self-expression is important in teaching methods used with children. Learners should be encouraged to discover information instead of being told facts, ideas, and precepts by their leader. Effective children's teachers do not do for the child things that the child can do for him or herself. Teaching methods should provide opportunities for the child to find answers to his or her own questions.

Children learn by doing. As they make personal discoveries through their own explorations, the realities they discover are meaningful at a level not otherwise possible.

A variety of activities can be used with this age group because of individual differences. While children need to be involved in the choice of activities, leaders need to guide these choices in light of their best knowledge of individual needs and goals.

In preparing training suggestions, writers and editors need to be aware that teaching materials are primarily used by volunteer workers. This means that suggested procedures must be easy to use and practical enough for leaders to handle them effectively.