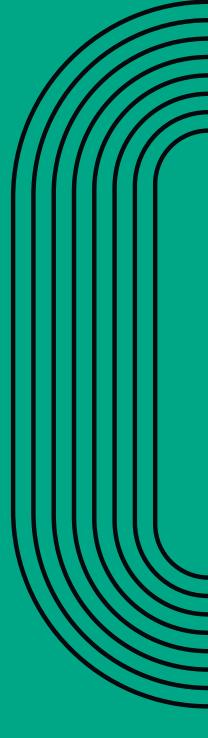
Intro to Children's Missions **Discipleship**











Intro to Children's Missions Discipleship

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Dear Leader,

Welcome to children's missions discipleship! At Woman's Missionary Union (WMU®, Southern Baptist Convention), we are all about making disciples of Jesus who live on mission. We firmly believe this includes our children, so they will be prepared to offer the only solution to our world's greatest need: Jesus.

This resource (for grades 1–6) will help you introduce to children—in a fun, interactive way—the command by Jesus to make disciples of all nations. This includes helping children understand *why* we must follow this command, *how* it is accomplished, and *their own role* in accomplishing the command. From here, ongoing missions discipleship will help children live out the Great Commission.

Are you ready to see God light a spark for the gospel in the heart of children? Pray God will speak to them. If they have not yet chosen to follow Jesus, pray they will understand how their sin separates them from God, and that Jesus is the only way their sins will be forgiven. If they are followers of Jesus, pray God will help them understand how to share the good news about Jesus with others, and that they will feel encouraged and equipped to do that right where they are—in their own home, neighborhood, school, and community.

We are praying for you!

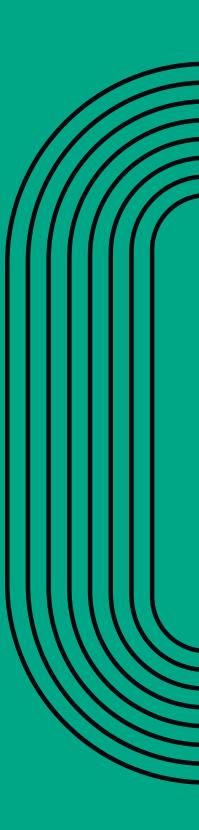
On mission for Him,

Saral Murray

Sarah Murray, editor

WMU Missional Characteristics:

- Learn about missions
- Pray for missions
- Support missions
- Do missions and tell about Jesus



Week 1: What Is the Great Commission?

Overview: Children will learn that Jesus gave His disciples a command to make disciples of all nations, and that we call this the Great Commission. They will be challenged to place this command in their own context of their neighborhood, city, state, etc.

Bible Verse: "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).

OPENING

Welcome children with a game or activity of your own choosing. Or, complete this activity with your group as they arrive.

Say What?

- 1. When children have arrived, ask them to form into a line with a little space in between each person.
- 2. Say: We're going to play the game Telephone. I will tell the person at the front of the line a silly sentence. That person will whisper the sentence to the next person in line, and so on, until the last person in line has heard the sentence. That person will then say out loud the sentence they heard.
- 3. Whisper a sentence to the first child in line. Some ideas include: cooked cupcakes cool quickly, five fine fresh fried fish for you, koala bears are cute and cuddly, and my fancy favorite food is fried frogs (or make up your own silly sentence!).
- **4.** After the last child in line has a chance to repeat what they heard, you can continue on to no. 5, or you can let that child move to the front and be the one to start the game with a sentence, and so forth.
- 5. When you are done playing the game, say: Those were just silly sentences, but in our story today we will hear about some people who heard an important message. They made sure they understood what they heard and then faithfully passed it on!
- 6. Lead your group in an opening prayer, or ask if there is a volunteer who would like to pray to open your time together.

Terms to Know

- **Sin**—any thought or behavior opposite to the Word of God or His character. Sin separates us from God.
- **Disciples**—people who follow Jesus and assist in the spreading of the good news of salvation through Him.
- Holy Spirit—a helper for people who follow Jesus.

STORY

As you prepare to lead the Story activity, please take a moment to review the "younger" and "older" suggestions to use with this section (see p. 5). Use these instructions to create an engaging story time that fits the needs of your group!

The Great Commission

Jesus came to earth to do what God wanted Him to do, which was to get rid of the sin that stood in the way of people being friends with God. He also showed us what God is like, because Jesus is God, and He taught people what God's kingdom is like.

Jesus taught all these things, and more, to His disciples—people who followed Him and learned from Him.

There were some people who didn't like what Jesus taught. It scared them because it took away the power they had over other people. They planned to kill Jesus. Jesus knew about their plan, but He allowed them to arrest Him and eventually kill Him. He did this because He knew God had a surprise—on the third day, Jesus raised from the dead!

After Jesus rose from the dead, He spent 40 days with His disciples. He spent time eating with them and teaching them. They were able to know Jesus was really alive.

Then, He told them to go to Galilee, a region in northern Israel. There on a mountain, Jesus appeared to them again. He told them He had been given authority over everything in heaven and earth. In that authority, He commanded them: "Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you."

He reassured them by saying, "You can be sure I am always with you, to the very end."

Jesus had given the disciples an important job. They would share the good news about Jesus to people all over the world!

(based on Matthew 28:16-20, Acts 1:8)

YOUNGER

Learn the Sign for Jesus

- 1. Read aloud the Story "The Great Commission" (p. 4) to children.
- **2.** Teach children how to use their hands to sign the name Jesus. Say: Sign language is used by people who are Deaf to communicate with others. Let's learn how to say Jesus in American Sign Language.
- **3.** Ask children to touch the tip of the middle finger of their dominant hand to the center of the palm of their nondominant hand. Then they should do the same motion with the other hand.
- **4.** Read the story "The Great Commission." Ask children to make the sign for Jesus each time they hear you read His name.
- **5.** Say: Some of the people with whom we share the good news about Jesus—just like the disciples did—may speak another language, like sign language! The good news about Jesus is for everyone, and we should always be ready to share it!

OLDER

Circular Recall

Supplies

- two foam balls or paper wads (different colors)
- electronic device on which to play upbeat praise music (optional)
- 1. Read aloud the Story "The Great Commission" (p. 4) to children.
- 2. Guide children to form a circle.
- 3. Lead them to pass the balls around the circle in opposite directions until you say Stop. (*Option:* If you have an electronic device on which to play praise music, play the music while children pass the ball. When you stop the music, children should also stop passing the ball.)
- **4.** The child with the ball that is a color of your choice will answer a question (see below) about the Story.

Questions

- 1. Name one reason why Jesus came to the earth (to get rid of the sin that separates us from God, to show us what God is like, to tell us what God's kingdom is like).
- What were the people who followed Jesus called? (disciples)
- 3. What did the people who didn't like Jesus do? (thev killed Jesus)
- **4.** What happened on the third day after Jesus died? (Jesus raised from the dead)
- **5.** How long was Jesus with His disciples after He rose from the dead? (40 days)
- **6.** Where did Jesus tell the disciples to go? (*Galilee*)
- 7. What were the three things Jesus commanded His disciples? (Go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you.)
- **8.** What did Jesus say to reassure the disciples? (*He would always be with them, even to the very end.*)
- 9. Jesus was talking to the disciples who were right in front of Him, but He was also talking to us today. We know that scripture applies to our lives today. So, Jesus was talking to the disciples, but He was also talking to who else? (Us!)

Option: To help children think about their role in the Great Commission, you may also ask: *How will people know about Jesus?* (We have to tell them!)

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Go and Tell

Supplies

- hula hoops (equal to the number of children in your group, minus one)
- printout of the Bible Memory Verse (p. 17)
- Place hula hoops on the ground, spread out with space in between. There should be one less than the number of children participating. (*Option:* If you don't have enough hula hoops on hand, you can use paper or any other object to signify a "house.")
- 2. Explain: Let's pretend each hula hoop is a house in our neighborhood, and we want to tell the people in them about Jesus. When I say Go and tell, quickly move to a house. If you are left without a house, you get to read our Bible memory verse out loud!
- 3. Shout: Go and tell! Each time children have found a new hoop and one child is out, remove a hoop (similar to musical chairs). Children who have read a verse may take a seat until the game is over.
- 4. Display the Bible Memory Verse sheet. Allow children not standing in a hoop to read the verse out loud (help younger children, as needed).
- Play until everyone has had a chance to read the verse.
- **6.** Remark: Jesus gave His followers an important command. He told them to tell other people about Him. We call this the Great Commission. We can tell people about Jesus, too!

ADVENTURE

Where in the World?

Supplies

- "Where in the World?" (one copy per child, p. 18)
- printout of the Bible Memory Verse (p. 17)
- crayons, markers, colored pencils
- scissors
- hole punches
- yarn or chenille stems
- 1. Say: We are learning about the Great Commission in Matthew 28. There are other places in the Bible that tell this same story, but with more details. One on those places is Acts 1:8. It says Jesus told His disciples: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other."
- 2. Hand each child a "Where in the World?" page. Work with children to fill in the first two blanks. Instruct them to draw a picture on each of the first two squares that reminds them of their city and state, and then color in the rest.
- **3.** Once they have the squares completed, they should use scissors to cut out all the squares out.
- **4.** Show children how to use a hole punch to punch a hole in the top of each square on the black dot and then thread them onto yarn or chenille stems.
- 5. Display the Bible Memory Verse. Read it aloud to children. When you get to the word Jerusalem, say: The disciples would have understood Jerusalem was the city they lived in with their family, friends, and neighbors. What city do you live in? (allow children time to answer).
- 6. When you get to the word Judea, say: The disciples would have understood Judea was an area or state they lived in. What state do we live in? (allow children time to answer).
- 7. When you get to the word Samaria, say: The disciples would have understood Samaria had a very different culture from where they lived (different customs, beliefs, etc.). What is a country with a culture different from the United States? (allow children time to answer).
- **8.** After you have read the end of the verse, ask: What do you think Jesus meant by "from one end of the earth to the other?" (allow children time to answer).
- Encourage children to read the verse with you.When you are done, collect the cards to use again in Lesson 3.

GAMES AROUND THE WORLD Pebble Chase—a Greek Game

Supplies

• 1 pebble

Play this game outdoors or inside in a large, open space.

- 1. Tell children they will play a game that children in Greece, which is located in southern Europe, like to play. Children in Greece need to hear about Jesus, too!
- 2. Choose a marker, such as a tree, wall, or fence. Instruct players to form a line 40 to 50 feet from the marker.
- 3. Select one child to be the Leader and give him or her the pebble. All players but the Leader will hold their hands out in front of them. The Leader pretends to place the pebble in each player's hand.
- **4.** When the Leader actually gives the stone to a player, that player begins running toward the marker. The other players will give chase.
- **5.** If the player is caught before reaching the marker, the person who catches him is the new Leader. If he safely reaches the marker, he becomes the new leader.
- 6. Play as time allows.
- **7.** Say: Sharing this pebble helps us remember how easy it can be to share the gospel with our friends and neighbors.

PRAYERTIME

Prayer Chain

Supplies

- 1-by-6" strips of paper
- pens or pencils
- stapler

Before the session, cut paper into 1-by-6" strips, enough for each child to have a few strips. You will add to the Prayer Chain each time you meet.

- Invite children to write down at least one prayer request or praise on a strip of paper. Help them to think about the story you read together as a prompt. Help children begin to understand that prayer requests should include others who are hurting and people we know who share Jesus with others.
- Once children have written their requests or praises, allow volunteers to share theirs with the group. As each request is shared, say a brief prayer for the request or praise.
- 3. Help children connect their paper strips into a chain and staple each new link. Hang it in a prominent place. Let children know you will add to the chain each week you meet.
- **4.** Say: God is faithful to hear and answer our prayers.

Week 2: Why is the Great Commission Important?

Overview: Children will learn that our greatest need is to be saved from sin, and that God has provided a way through the death and resurrection of Jesus. They will also learn this news is meant to be shared with all nations, which Jesus told His disciples in the Great Commission.

Bible Verse: "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).

OPENING

Welcome children with a game or activity of your own choosing. Or, complete this activity with your group as they arrive.

Prove It!

Before the session, ensure you have a large, open space for this activity.

- As children arrive, ask them to share something amazing they can do, but tell them it should be something they can do in front of you (i.e., walk backward, snap fingers, whistle, wink with each eye, do a cartwheel, etc.).
- 2. They should say: *I will* _____. You say: *Prove it!* Make sure children have enough space to do what they said they could do without injuring another child or themselves.
- 3. Allow all children to perform at least one action (or more if time allows). When they are done, gather them together. Say: You claimed you were able to do something, and then you proved you could do it. The Bible tells us in Romans 5:8 that God not only says He loves us, He proved it: "But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Let's learn more about it!

STORY

As you prepare to lead the Story activity, please take a moment to review the "younger" and "older" suggestions to use with this section (see p. 8). Use these instructions to create an engaging story time that fits the needs of your group!

A Big Problem . . . and a Big Solution

Long ago, when the world was still new, a man and woman lived in a beautiful garden named Eden. The garden was perfect. It was full of every different beautiful tree you could think of, and the trees all produced healthy, delicious fruit.

There were two special trees in the very middle of the garden. One had fruit that let people live forever. The other tree had fruit that let people tell the difference between good and evil.

God placed the man in the garden and gave him a job. He was to farm the land and take care of all that was there. And God gave the man a command: "You may eat fruit from any tree in the garden," God said. "But you must not eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you do, you will certainly die."

But the man and woman disobeyed God—they sinned. They ate fruit from the tree God told them not to eat from. Instead of making them wise, they realized they had been foolish. And now, in the beautiful garden, they were suddenly very afraid. So, they hid from God.

It is hard to hide from God! He knew where the man and his wife were. He was very disappointed and sad they had disobeyed Him. It made Him sad that they were afraid of Him, instead of being able to walk in the garden with Him when He came to visit. He loved them so much!

But God knew the best thing to do for the man and his wife was to send them away from the garden. In their sinful state, if they ate from the other tree in the middle of the garden—the tree with fruit that let you live forever—they would live forever in sinful, wasting bodies. He didn't want that for them.

God put a plan in motion to bring the man and his wife, as well as all their descendants, back into friendship with Him—so they didn't have to be afraid anymore. In His plan, He would get rid of the sin that infected their bodies, so they could live forever one day. Do you know what His plan was?

That's right—His plan was Jesus! "But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

(based on Genesis 3)

YOUNGER

Me, Sin, and Jesus

Supplies

- 3 clear plastic cups (any size)
- iodine
- bleach
- water
- masking tape and pen

Before the session, use the masking tape and pen to label one cup Me and fill it halfway with water. Label the second cup Sin and fill all the way with 90% water and 10% iodine. Label the third cup Jesus and fill all the way with 90% water and 10% bleach.

- 1. Read aloud the Story "A Big Problem . . . and a Big Solution" (p. 7) to children.
- 2. Invite children to sit at a table with the three cups in front of you, labels facing out. Say: The verse you just heard said we are sinners. Do you know what that word means? (Allow children to answer.) Say: A sin is any thought or behavior opposite to the Word of God or His character. This could be disobeying, lying, thinking mean thoughts about someone, etc. Sin separates us from God.
- 3. Say: God knows we are separated from Him because of our sin. That makes Him sad, because He loves us. So God has a plan to fix it. That was also in the verse you heard: Christ died for us!
- **4.** Say: Look at these cups. The first time you sinned (hold up the Sin cup), you were no longer clean. You were separated from God. (Pour some of the iodine mixture from the Sin cup into the Me cup.)
- 5. Say: When Jesus came to the Earth, He lived His whole life without sinning (Hold up the Jesus cup). Now, the Bible tells us the punishment for sinning is death. That's harsh, but it's the law. We sinned, but Jesus didn't. God's will was for Jesus to die in our place for the sins we committed. Jesus willingly did this by dying on the cross. So now we can trust what He did on the cross, and the fact that He overcame death by rising from the grave on the third day, so our sins can be washed clean.
- 6. Hold up the Jesus cup. Say: Let's see what happens when I ask Jesus to forgive me and wash away my sins. (Pour some of the bleach mixture from the Jesus cup into the Me cup).
- **7.** Say: Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection make it possible for us to have our sins forgiven so we can be friends of God. That is some really good news!
- **8.** Ask: Is this news just for us? (Allow answers.) This is the news Jesus wanted His disciples—and now us—to share with the whole world!

Note: Be sensitive that children may have questions or want to know more about how to ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins. Download the "Becoming a Christian" flyer at wmu.com/children/how-to-lead-childrensmissions-discipleship, or use the copy on p. 22 for more verses to help children.

Want to know the science? When mixed with water, the iodine-and-water mixture turns the water a reddish-brown color. When the bleach-and-water mixture is added, a chemical reaction occurs between the chlorine molecules in the bleach and the iodine molecules, turning the mixture clear!

Leader tip: Make sure to keep all chemicals out of reach of children and stored properly.

OLDER

Photo Hunt

Supplies

- "Walk the Walk Game Cards" (p. 19)
- phone with photos of scavenger hunt locations

Before the session, cut apart "Walk the Walk Game Cards" (p. 19). Choose six locations in and around your church and photograph them. The last location should be your church's baptistry, or where you typically hold baptisms. Place one card inside of a Bible at the verse indicated on the card and leave them (in order), one at each of the six locations.

- 1. Read aloud the Story "A Big Problem . . . and a Big Solution" (p. 7) to children.
- 2. Tell children they are going on a photo scavenger hunt. You will show them a picture of a location in or around your church on your phone, and they must figure out where that location is. Then you will all walk together to the location. When they arrive, they will need to find the Bible with a card inside. One child will read the card and the True or False statement on the card, and you will all discuss the answer. Then you will look at a picture of the next location, and so on.
- 3. Show children a photo of the first location on your phone.
- **4.** Accompany them to the location when they figure out where it is.
- 5. When children arrive at the first location and find the Bible, choose one child to read the Game Card and the True or False statement. Discuss as a group. (Answers to the True or False statements: (1) False (Everyone has sinned) (2) False (Even if no one finds out, you have still sinned and earned death.) (3) True. (4) False (We cannot earn God's love or forgiveness. God provided the only way to either one, which is through Jesus.) (5) True. (6) True.) Continued on p. 9.

- **5.** The final location is the baptistry, or wherever you typically hold baptisms. After you have read the card and discussed the True or False statement, say: At our church, we publicly baptize people who have decided to follow Jesus, which is what Jesus tells us to do. It's a way they can tell others in the church they are following Jesus, and it allows the church to encourage that person and pray for them.
- **6.** Say: You just heard some really good news in these verses. Is this news just for us? (Allow answers.) This is the news Jesus wanted His disciples—and now us—to share with the whole world!
- 7. Close with prayer and invite children to talk to you privately if they decide follow Christ or if they have questions. *Note:* Download the "Becoming a Christian" flyer at wmu.com/children/how-to-lead-childrens-missions-discipleship, or use the copy on p. 22, for more verses to help children.

MAKING CONNECTIONS Race for the Good News

Supplies

- Bibles
- 1. Ask children to stand in a line facing you with one hand under their Bibles and one hand on top.
- 2. Say: We have just heard the good news about how Jesus saves us from our sin. But we aren't supposed to keep it to ourselves. In Matthew 28, the verse we learned last week called the Great Commission, Jesus tells us: "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).
- 3. Say: The Bible is full of verses that talk about sharing the good news about Jesus. Let's see how quickly you can find some of them. I'll call out the reference for a verse. When I say Go, you may begin looking for the verse. When you find it, step forward and read the verse aloud. If more than one person steps forward at the same time, I will choose one child to read the verse.
- **4.** Say: At the beginning of each round, you'll close your Bible and put one hand under it and one hand on top of it.
- 5. Choose from these verses for children to find: Matthew 28:19–20; Acts 1:8; Acts 10:36; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:15; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; Philippians 1:5; 2 Timothy 2:2.

Option: Pair older children with younger children as a team, or pair a churched child with an unchurched child to search for the verses. You know your group best—help children feel encouraged and equipped to search in the Bible.

ADVENTURE

Try, Try Again!

Supplies

- masking or painter's tape
- Bible

Before the session, place a 10" strip of masking or painter's tape on the floor in a straight line. Ensure the space around the tape is clear of any furniture.

- 1. Invite children to stand near the tape. Say: *I* wonder if any of you could walk along this line without stepping off? Ask for a volunteer to walk the line.
- 2. When the volunteer comes forward, direct him to the top of the line. Say: I forgot to tell you one thing! Before you can walk on the line, you have to spin like this. Carefully spin the volunteer 10 times before allowing him to walk the line
- **3.** Let all children have a turn spinning and walking the line.
- 4. Invite children to sit in a circle. Say: When I first asked if you could walk the line, did you think it would be easy or hard? How did your thoughts change when I said you had to spin first?
- **5.** Say: When we trust Jesus to save us, we don't have to add anything to it. Kind of like walking this line, adding spinning makes it harder!
- 6. Open the Bible and read Ephesians 2:8–9 ("God's grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn't come from anything you do. It is God's gift. It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it.")
- **7.** Say: Our sins are forgiven only because of Jesus, not because of anything we do.
- 8. Invite children to walk the line again, but do not spin them this time. Instead, hold each child's hand as he or she walks the line. At the end of the line, encourage the child to say *Thank you for Jesus!*

GAMES AROUND THE WORLD

Chicken Eating Corn

Supplies

- 12 pony beads per child
- 1. Tell children they will play a game that children in China, which is located in Asia, like to play. Children in China need to hear about Jesus, too!
- 2. Invite children to sit on the floor with some space around them. Place 12 pony beads in front of each player.
- **3.** Show children how to cup their hands with their index fingers placed against each other to represent the beak of a chicken.
- 4. Tell them they will pick up their beads, one by one, with their "beaks" and let the beads drop into their cupped hands, which represent the chicken's stomach.
- The first child to collect all the beads wins! Play more rounds, as time allows.

Option: Encourage children to pass beads around the circle using their "chicken beaks" to move the beads from one child to the next.

PRAYERTIME

Prayer Chain

Supplies

- 1-by-6" strips of paper
- · pens or pencils
- stapler

Before the session, cut paper into 1-by-6" strips, enough for each child to have a few strips. This is a work in progress—you will add to the Prayer Chain each time you meet.

- 1. Invite children to write down at least one prayer request or praise on a strip of paper. Help them to think about the story you read together as a prompt.
- 2. Once children have written their requests or praises, allow volunteers to share theirs with the group. As each request is shared, say a brief prayer for the request or praise.
- 3. Help children connect their paper strips into a chain and staple each new link. Hang it in a prominent place. Remind children you will add to the chain each week you meet.
- **4.** Say: God is faithful to hear and answer our prayers.

Week 3: How is the Great Commission Accomplished?

Overview: Children will learn the Great Commission is accomplished through His church—the people who follow Jesus. They will consider ways in which they or others in the church can share Jesus. They will also practice ways they can tell others Jesus loves them.

Bible Verse: "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).

OPENING

Welcome children with a game or activity of your own choosing. Or, complete this activity with your group as they arrive.

Balloon Up!

Supplies

balloons (as many as you would like)

Before the session, inflate the balloons.

- 1. As children arrive, invite them to stand in a circle, holding hands. Tell them you will throw a balloon into the middle of the circle, and their task is to keep the balloon in the air—without letting each other's hands go—for as long as possible.
- As more children arrive, increase the number of balloons added to the circle to increase the difficulty.
- 3. After playing several rounds, invite children to have a seat. Say: Today we are going to be learning how the Great Commission is accomplished. Think about how you had to work together as a group to keep the balloons in the air. Let's keep that in mind as we listen to our story!

STORY

As you prepare to lead the Story activity, please take a moment to review the "younger" and "older" suggestions to use with this section (see p. 12). Use these instructions to create an engaging story time that fits the needs of your group!

Philip Shows How to Share the Good News

In the first week, we learned the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19–20) is Jesus's command to His followers to share the good news about Him to all nations. Last week, we learned the good news is that, although we are all sinners and separated from God, we can be friends with God again because of Jesus' death and resurrection.

This good news is for everyone—so how does everyone hear it? The Bible gives us one example in Philip. He was a follower of Jesus and part of the early church. Philip had his listening ears on for God. We know this because it says an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip and told him to go to a specific road.

That was all he told Philip, but the Bible says Philip was obedient. And he kept listening for God. On the road he saw a chariot. The Holy Spirit told Philip to stand by the chariot. Again, Philip obeyed God.

Guess what Philip heard? A man from Ethiopia was in the chariot reading out loud from the Bible, specifically from the book of Isaiah, the prophet. He was reading a prophecy about Jesus! Philip asked the man if he knew what he was reading. "How can I?" the man asked. "I need someone to explain it to me." Philip was ready! He climbed into the chariot with the man and told him the good news about Jesus.

The Holy Spirit helped the Ethiopian man understand what Jesus had done for him. He wanted to follow Jesus right away. Philip baptized the man in water that was by the road. The man was full of joy because he knew the truth about Jesus!

God uses His church—the people who follow Jesus—to accomplish the Great Commission. He uses adults and children to accomplish the Great Commission. He uses people near and people far away to accomplish the Great Commission. People only need to listen for God, be obedient when He tells us what to do, and be ready to share the good news about Jesus—just like Philip!

(based on Acts 8:26-40)

YOUNGER

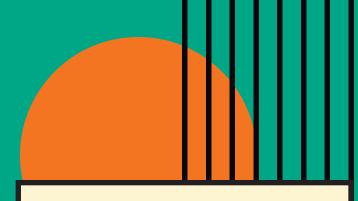
I'm Ready!

Supplies

- handkerchief
- 1. Read "Philip Shows How to Share the Good News" (p. 11) aloud to children.
- 2. Divide children into two teams. Ask each team to number off. Tell them to line up facing each other, but order them so No. 1 is opposite the last person on the opposing team, No. 2 is opposite the second to last, and so on.
- 3. Tell children you will drop a handkerchief in the center between the two lines. You will call out a number. The two people (one on each team) who have that number must race to grab the handkerchief and run back to their teammates without being tagged by their opponent. If a team member succeeds, he will answer a question for his team (see questions below). If his opponent tags him, the opponent will answer a question for her team.
- 4. Play until all questions have been asked.
- 5. Say: People who are followers of Jesus—the church—can tell people outside the church about Jesus. There are even people we call missionaries who share the good news with people in other parts of the country and even the world. The beautiful thing is that we all work together to tell as many people as possible. We also help missionaries by learning about them, praying for them, and giving to support their work.

Questions

- 1. What do we call the command from Jesus to share the good news about Him to all nations? (the Great Commission)
- 2. What is the good news about Jesus? (We can be friends with God because of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus came to take away our sin.)
- **3.** Who was Philip? (a follower of Jesus, part of the early church)
- **4.** Who spoke to Philip? (an angel of the Lord)
- **5.** What did the angel tell Philip to do? (go to a specific road)
- **6.** Did Philip obey or disobey God? (*obey*)
- 7. What did Philip hear the Ethiopian man in the chariot reading? (the Bible, prophecy about Jesus)
- 8. When the man said he needed someone to explain what he was reading, what did Philip do? (climbed into the chariot with the man, told him the good news about Jesus)
- **9.** How did the Ethiopian man respond to what Philip told him? (he wanted to follow Jesus right away, he was baptized, he was full of joy)
- 10. Who does God use to accomplish the Great Commission? (*His church, people who follow Jesus, adults, children, people near, people far*)
- **11.** How can we be like Philip? (*listen for God, be obedient to God, be ready to share the good news*)



OLDER

How in the World?

Supplies

- "Where in the World" tags from Week 1
- white board and marker
- pencils
- 1. Read "Philip Shows How to Share the Good News" (p. 11) aloud to children.
- 2. Hand children their "Where in the World" tags and pencils. Say: People who are followers of Jesus—the church—can tell people outside the church about Jesus. There are even people we call missionaries who share the good news with people in other parts of the country and even the world. The beautiful thing is that we all work together to tell as many people as possible.
- 3. Explain: Think about Philip and the way he shared the good news about Jesus with the Ethiopian man. What happened in the encounter? (Philip went where God told him to go, he listened to what the man said, he was ready to share about Jesus) How does this help us know how we can share the good news about Jesus with other people? (We have to listen to them, we have to be ready to share the good news, etc.)
- 4. Tell children as a group you will brainstorm ways people can share Jesus in each of the places mentioned on the tags. Encourage them to think about places they might go in their city or state and who they might meet in those places. Help them think about ways they might listen to someone or start a conversation. How could they turn that conversation into one about Jesus? When you discuss places outside your state, help them know missionaries might help people with food or medicine, repair buildings or roads, or provide fun events to get to know people and then share the good news about Jesus. Encourage them to use their imagination. As you brainstorm, write the ways on the white board. Tell children to write some of those ways on their tags.
- 5. When you are done, pray that God will help children listen to Him for direction on where to go to tell about Jesus and that they will be obedient. Pray the missionaries will also be obedient to share Jesus where they are. Encourage children to take their tags home and continue to pray.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Pass the Hula Hoop

Supplies

- printout of the Bible Memory Verse (p. 17)
- hula hoop
- 1. Guide children to stand in a circle. Place the Bible Memory Verse (p. 17) on the ground in the middle of the circle.
- 2. Loop the hula hoop over one child's arm and ask all children to join hands, closing the circle. Say: Without letting go of anyone's hands, the player with the hoop must say the first word of the Bible Memory Verse and then step into and through the hoop, so it rests on her other arm. She must then slide it onto the next person's arm, who repeats the same maneuver (only saying the second word of the verse). And so on.
- **3.** Repeat until the entire verse has been said. Allow everyone to say the verse together.
- **4.** Repeat the activity, only faster. Always repeat the verse together when children are done.

ADVENTURE

Tell People About Jesus

Supplies

- 5 paper balls per child
- clean, empty trash can
- **1.** Set a trash can in the front of your meeting space. Give each child five paper balls.
- 2. Say each of the following phrases to your group and ask them to repeat the phrase. After they say the phrase, they can throw a paper ball at the trashcan.
 - God loves me and He loves you, too—that's why He sent Jesus!
 - You are special to God.
 - Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.
 - Jesus' death and resurrection means our sins can be forgiven.
 - Jesus laid down His life because He loves you.
- 3. Allow children to rebound the missed balls. This time they have to provide statements about the story or the Bible Memory Verse (p. 17) (or any other verse they know) to shoot.
- **4.** Say: Telling people about Jesus is something we all can do. Sometimes, we are near people who need to hear the gospel. Sometimes, people are far away who need to hear the gospel. Just like you took close shots and far away shots, they are all important to sharing God's love with others.

GAMES AROUND THE WORLD

Da Ga's Tail

Supplies

handkerchief

Play this game outside or in a large, open space.

- 1. Tell children they will play a game that children in Africa like to play. Children in Africa need to hear about Jesus, too!
- 2. Ask children to form a line. Give the child at the end of the line a handkerchief to tuck into the back pocket or the waistband of his pants. Say: Each person will hold the right shoulder of the person in front of them. You are now a snake—a silly snake that is trying to catch its own tail. The child at the head of the line is the head of the snake. She must swing around and try to grab the handkerchief tucked into the pants of the last person in line—the snake's tail! Tail, you must try to stay away from the head.
- 3. Explain that if the line breaks, the head moves back to become the new tail. If the head catches the tail, a new tail (or the second-to-last player) will take his place.
- **4.** Play as time allows.

PRAYERTIME

Prayer Chain

Supplies

- 1-by-6" strips of paper
- pens or pencils
- stapler

Before the session, cut paper into 1-by-6" strips, enough for each child to have a few strips. This is a work in progress—you will add to the Prayer Chain each time you meet.

- Invite children to write down at least one prayer request or praise on a strip of paper. Help them to think about the story you read together as a prompt.
- Once children have written their requests or praises, allow volunteers to share theirs with the group. As each request is shared, say a brief prayer for the request or praise.
- 3. Help children connect their paper strips into a chain and staple each new link. Hang it in a prominent place. Let children know you will add to the chain each week you meet.
- **4.** Say: God is faithful to hear and answer our prayers.

Week 4: What is My Role in the Great Commission?

Overview: Children will learn how children just like them are sharing Jesus with others. They will have the opportunity to make something to give to someone that will help them share about Jesus with that person. They will be challenged think about what they would do in various situations to share love and Jesus with others.

Bible Verse: "So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).

OPENING

Welcome children with a game or activity of your own choosing. Or, complete this activity with your group as they arrive.

Travel Game

- 1. As children arrive, start a travel destination memory game. Guide them to stand in a circle. Call on the first child to name a place he would like to visit. The next child will name a new place as well as the place named by the child before. The next child will name her place and the two places before her, and so on around the circle.
- Play in rounds so you can add children as they arrive—new children will start where the round began so they can hear all of the places.
- After all children have arrived, play one more round of the travel game with this change: every child must name a mode of transportation he could use to get to his place.
- 4. Say: We've been learning about the Great Commission—Jesus' command to tell everyone in the world the good news about Him. Sometimes God calls us to go to other places to tell people about Jesus.

STORY

As you prepare to lead the Story activity, please take a moment to review the "younger" and "older" suggestions to use with this section. Use these instructions to create an engaging story time that fits the needs of your group!

A Child Just Like You ...

In the Andes Mountains of Peru, located in South America, a boy lives with his sister and parents, who are Southern Baptist missionaries. His dad (who was a Royal Ambassador when he was your age!) and his mom work with churches to share the good news about Jesus with people who live in the mountains. They also host a Kid's Club in the city—and he gets to help! Every Saturday, the boy, his mom, and his sister serve breakfast and share Bible stories with children who live in the neighborhood. The children love to come to the Club and hear about the attributes of God, which means the characteristics of God and what He is like.

Here in the United States, a girl named Julianna is making a lot of headbands—they help her share the love of Jesus with others. Julianna had a sister named Brooke who died because of cancer. Brooke loved Jesus. Even though she was sick, she made fancy headbands with flowers and feathers, and she gave them to other children who were sick, too. Julianna continues her sister's legacy. She knows that people who are sick need hope, and there is no better hope than the hope Jesus gives us!

These children are just like you! You can share the good news about Jesus and His love with people around you, too. Just listen for what God wants you to do, be obedient when He tells you what to do, and be ready to share the good news about Jesus, wherever you are!

YOUNGER

Growing Love for Jesus

Supplies

- small clay pots (3", one for each child)
- variety flower seed packets
- markers
- ribbon or jute tie
- 1. Invite children to use markers to decorate small clay pots. Remind them to include statements about Jesus' love, or help them find an appropriate Bible verse (John 3:16, etc.).
- 2. Give them a packet of flower seeds and direct them to place it inside their pot. Help them wrap the pot with ribbon or jute.
- 3. Say: Give this pot to a neighbor or someone you know who needs to hear about Jesus. It could even be someone who is older and doesn't have family visit them very often. Ask them if they want you to help them plant the seeds. Tell them you are giving it to them because God loves me and He loves you, too—that's why He sent Jesus!

OLDER

Building Love for Jesus

Supplies

- scraps of hard wood (various lengths, from 2" to 2")
- sandpaper
- rags and clear varnish
- newspapers or another table covering
- old t-shirts or smocks
- box or bag (large enough in which to fit the wood)
- markers or paint pens

Select a well-ventilated area to do this activity. Before the session, ask if your church's children's ministry could use the blocks, or perhaps they could be given to a local Baptist Children's Home or other place serving preschool-aged children.

- **1.** Say: We are going to make some wooden playing blocks for children. We are going to place them in a (box or bag) we've decorated that lets them know Jesus loves them.
- 2. Show children how to use sandpaper most effectively by sanding with the grain of the wood when possible. Ask them to sand the corners of the wood smooth. Smooth all rough places on boards.
- 3. Use a damp rag to wipe sawdust off the wood before varnishing.
- **4.** Give children an old t-shirt or smock to wear over their clothes. Ask them to help put newspaper or another table covering over the tabletops.
- **5.** Show children how to dip the rag in the varnish and give blocks two coats of clear varnish.
- **6.** Let children discuss what they want to write on the bag or box. Help them think of Bible verses that would be appropriate or statements about the love of Jesus. Instruct children to use the paint pens or markers to decorate the box or bag.
- 7. When the wood is dry, place the blocks inside the box or bag. Deliver to a ministry.

Option: To save time, allow children to work on different tasks at the same time. Some will sand, some will varnish, and some will work on the box or bag.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Envelope Race

Supplies

- 3-by-5 index cards (46 per team)
- envelopes

Before the session, write the Bible Memory Verse on index cards (one word per card). Shuffle the cards and place them in an envelope. (*Option:* For younger children, break the verse into phrases to write on the index cards.)

- 1. Divide children into teams of four players or less (pair older children with younger children, if possible). Say: Inside the envelopes are cards with your Bible Memory Verse. When I say Go, work with your team to put the verse in order. When your team finishes, turn and cheer for another team still working.
- 2. When everyone has their verse in order, encourage children to circle up and cheer for your entire group putting their verse together correctly! Repeat the verse together as a group.
- **3.** Ask: What are some ways you can think of to share Jesus with someone else? (Prompt children by helping them think about things they enjoy doing, things they are good at, or places they go every day.)

ADVENTURE

What Would You Do?

- 1. Say: I am going to tell you a situation and I want you to get into a group of two or three and quickly discuss what you might say to the person or do in that situation. Think about what we've discussed about letting people know Jesus loves them. Sometimes this means helping them know we care about them, which gives us opportunities to tell them about what Jesus did for them.
- 2. Use the following situations, or make up some of your own. While children discuss, move around the room and help any groups that need suggestions, and praise children who offer ideas. Encourage children to form new groups to answer each question.
 - Your friend has been having an off day. Now that you're at the playground, she is sitting by herself and looks like she's crying. What would you do?
 - Your neighbor is elderly. He recently got a puppy, and he knows you like to see it and pet it. You haven't seen him for a week or two, but today he's outside with the dog. Your neighbor is walking with a cane. What would you do?
 - A friend on your soccer team really wants to practice his footwork and dribbling the ball to get better at the game. He invites you over to practice in his backyard. You know his family doesn't go to church. What would you do?
 - There was a new boy in your class today. He doesn't speak much English, and he kept to himself at lunch. What would you do?
- 3. Invite children to sit at a table or on the floor. Ask for volunteers to share something they said or heard they thought might be a good way to love others and tell them the good news about Jesus. Say: We can always be ready to share the good news about Jesus with others!

GAMES OF THE WORLD

Pusa At Aso [POO-sah AT A-soh]

Supplies

- masking or painter's tape
- sticks, shoes, etc. (can be any object, one per child)

Before the session, use masking or painter's tape to mark a large circle (approximately 6" in diameter) on the floor.

- 1. Tell children they will play a game that children in the Philippines like to play. Children in the Philippines need to hear about Jesus, too!
- 2. Say: The name of this game, Pusa At Aso, means
 Cat and Dog. I will select one child to be the Dog.
 He will sit in the middle of the circle amongst his
 "bones" (these are the sticks or whatever object you
 designate) and guard them. Everyone else is a Cat.
 The Cats must try to take one bone per Cat from the
 Dog without being tagged. If no Cats are tagged, the
 child playing the Dog will be Dog for another round. If
 a Cat is tagged, she becomes the new Dog.
- 3. Play as time allows.

PRAYERTIME

Prayer Chain

Supplies

- 1-by-6" strips of paper
- pens or pencils
- stapler

Before the session, cut paper into 1-by-6" strips, enough for each child to have a few strips. This is a work in progress—you can continue to add to the Prayer Chain, even after this unit is complete!

- Invite children to write down at least one prayer request or praise on a strip of paper. Help them to think about the story you read together as a prompt.
- Once children have written their requests or praises, allow volunteers to share theirs with the group. As each request is shared, say a brief prayer for the request or praise.
- 3. Help children connect their paper strips into a chain and staple each new link. Hang it in a prominent place.
- 4. Say: God is faithful to hear and answer our prayers.



"So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

"Where in the World?" cards

Week 1, Adventure activity

• The Great Commission	My City
My State	A Different Country
Ends of the Earth	"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you. Then you will tell people about me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria. And you will even tell other people about me from one end of the earth to the other." (Acts 1:8)

Walk the Walk Game Cards

Copy this page onto cardstock. Cut apart cards and hide them around your church. Take a picture of each place you hide a card to use during "Photo Hunt" (Week 2).

1

Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory.

Romans 3:23

True or False: My pastor is such a great guy—he has never sinned!

2

When you sin, the pay you get is death.
Romans 6:23a

True or False: It was just a little lie. No one will get hurt.

3

But God gives you the gift of eternal life.
That's because of what Christ Jesus
our Lord has done.

Romans 6:23*b*

True or False: I can have the gift of eternal life from God because of what Jesus did on the cross and through His resurrection from the dead.

4

But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

True or False: First I have to get my life right, then I'll ask for God's forgiveness.

5

Say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord."
Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved.
Romans 10:9

True or False: I believe Jesus died on the cross and then rose from the dead—He took away my sins. I told my Sunday school teacher I want Jesus to be Lord of my life from now on. I was saved today!

6

Those who belong to Christ Jesus are no longer under God's judgment.

Romans 8:1

True or False: I asked Jesus to forgive my sins, and I am learning how to be more like Him. Sometimes I mess up, but I know God forgives me and loves me!

FAMILY MISSIONS FOCUS

Use this resource to reinforce what your child is learning in missions discipleship.

In this "Introduction to Children's Missions Discipleship," children are learning about Jesus' Great Commission to tell all nations about Him. This includes helping children understand why we must follow this command, how it is accomplished, and their own role in accomplishing the command.

BIBLE FOCUS

Children are learning Matthew 28:19—20—"So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you." Part of sharing the good news about Jesus is being a witness to what He has done in our own lives. Start making a list with your child about things you have seen God do (this can be something as simple as seeing a pretty sunset, a good grade on a test your child was worried about, or hearing that someone you had been praying for is doing better). Think of ways you can share that news with others.

MISSIONS FOCUS

Sidewalk Art

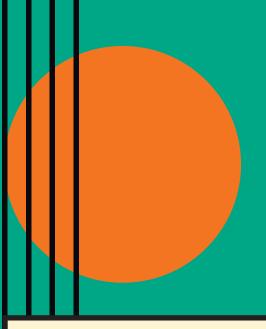
Your child practiced some statements that can be used to tell others about Jesus and His love. These include: God loves me and He loves you, too—that's why He sent Jesus!; You are special to God.; Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.; Jesus' death and resurrection means our sins can be forgiven.; and Jesus laid down His life because He loves you. With your child, find a sidewalk in a public area where lots of people walk. Using chalk, draw on the sidewalk a message about God's love. Pray for the people you see passing by as you work and share with people who may talk with you about what you are doing. You can share God's love in a creative way!

Pick Me Up

Do you have a neighbor who is experiencing a hard time? Maybe they've been sick. Or, maybe they have just been experiencing a busy time, like the birth of a baby. Whatever the circumstance, let your child help you make a plate of cookies or brownies. Make a card to go with the food that says God loves me and He loves you, too—that's why He sent Jesus! Let your child help you deliver the food and offer to pray for your neighbor.

Bring One Extra

If your family has travel plans, collect an assortment of extra small and handy items (hand sanitizer, stain wipes, bug-repellent bracelets, adhesive bandages, etc.) to pack in your travel bag or amusement park carryall. Let your child add a sticker to each item with a short caption (God loves you!) or a Bible verse. When your child notices a need, encourage him or her to offer a small, handy item to a fellow traveler. When your family shares items with a fellow traveler, make a point to share something about Jesus.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP!

For questions about starting or leading a children's missions discipleship group:

National WMU: Keith Gates, ministry consultant, at kgates@wmu.org or (205) 995-4816.

National WMU: Heather Keller, ministry consultant, hkeller@wmu.org or (205) 995-4816.

State WMU: Find links to state WMU websites at wmu.com/statecontacts.
Contact your local Baptist association, your state WMU office, or national WMU for training opportunities.

Do you want more information about children's missions discipleship for your church? Download a free Starter Pack at wmu.com/getstarted.

Becoming A Christian

Good news! God loves you and every person in the world. He loves us very much!

There's bad news, too. Each person has sinned. We have done things God does not like.

The Bible says: "Everyone has sinned" (Romans 3:23).

But there's more. Because God loves us so much, He sent His Son, Jesus, to Earth. Jesus died on the Cross for our sins. He came back to life to show His power over death and sin.

The Bible says: "When you sin, the pay you get is death. But God gives you the gift of eternal life. That's because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done" (Romans 6:23).

Becoming a Christian starts with telling God that you have sinned. Believe that Jesus died and came back to life to save you from your sins. Jesus is the only way we can be with God forever.

Thank God that Jesus takes away your sin. Turn away from sinning. Commit your life to Jesus. Ask God to help you do what He wants you to do.

The Bible says: "Say with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord.' Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved" (Romans 10:9).

Christians try to follow God in everything they do. They ask God to help them love people as Jesus loves them. God is more important to a Christian than anything else.

Talk with your parents, your missions leader, or another Christian adult to learn more about becoming a Christian.

MISSIONS JOURNEY: Kids





