

# Why Missions Discipleship Is Important for the Church

“WMU helped me learn to look outside myself and recognize the needs of others and try to help them. My involvement in missions groups at an early age helped me understand other cultures very different from my own and helped me develop a worldview. Teaching missions groups showed me the power of God to change a young life into someone He could work through to accomplish His will.”

— Shirley Cox



Missions discipleship is grounded in the command of Jesus to His disciples, “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20 CSB).

Missions discipleship in the church provides opportunities for everyone—preschoolers through adults—to be involved in missions. Churches who provide missions discipleship encourage people to grow in their faith as they learn about missions, pray for missions, support missions, and do missions.

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# How to Start Missions Discipleship in the Church



## How to start missions discipleship in the church:

- 1. Seek out leaders.** The suggested way of organizing WMU in a church is to have a WMU director and missions groups for any or all age levels. Or the WMU director, the pastor, or another church leader may lead missions awareness and involvement activities.
- 2. Order resources.** Using WMU resources will help you plan missions involvement and share information that is timely, inspiring, and challenging. Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide is a great overall resource to help you get started.
- 3. Plan.** Form a WMU leadership team to plan and coordinate the work of WMU. Quarterly meetings are suggested, but each team determines the frequency of planning meetings.
- 4. Invite.** Involve your church in missions and equip them to share Christ. Invite people to participate in churchwide opportunities and in age-level groups.
- 5. Work with other leaders to provide multiple opportunities.** Collaborate to offer different ways to involve everyone in the church in missions. Continue to start new churchwide activities as well as age-level groups as needed. Consider how you can utilize WMU Compassion Ministries—Project HELP: Mental Health, Christian Women’s Job Corps/Christian Men’s Job Corps, WorldCrafts, and Pure Water, Pure Love—as a springboard for missions involvement.
- 6. Communicate.** Keep your church informed about missions activities, groups, and projects.

### We’re here to help!

If you have questions about starting or leading churchwide WMU, we would enjoy talking with you. Contact Joye Smith at [jsmith@wmu.org](mailto:jsmith@wmu.org) or find links to state WMU websites at [wmu.com/statecontacts](http://wmu.com/statecontacts).



**Connect with us!**  
[facebook.com/NationalWMU](https://facebook.com/NationalWMU)

# Ways to Engage Your Church



Engage your church in missions awareness and involvement. These resources will help you provide churchwide opportunities for the year and expand as needed with age-level missions groups, special projects, and other opportunities. WMU print and digital resources are available from [wmu.com](http://wmu.com) or by calling 1-800-968-7301.



## Missions Leader: WMU Planning Guide 2022–23

Plan for an entire year! This guide introduces the theme for the year and provides suggestions for churchwide missions events, weeks of prayer

and missions offering promotion, leadership tips, and much more. Order one per leader.

- Print: \$19.99 • W223101
- Digital: \$17.99 • E223104

## International Mission Study

The annual International Mission Study provides resources for every age level in your church to learn about, pray for, and support international missions. Learn more about the current study at [wmu.com/ims](http://wmu.com/ims).

## Project HELP: Mental Health

As Christians, we are called to encourage those around us with the love of Christ, walk alongside them through difficult seasons, and help them know the Lord is near. Visit [wmu.com/mentalhealth](http://wmu.com/mentalhealth) to learn more.

## Christian Women's Job Corps/Christian Men's Job Corps (CWJC/CMJC)

CWJC/CMJC—one of WMU's compassion ministries—exists to equip women and men in a Christian context for life and employment. Through nearly 200 registered and certified CWJC/CMJC sites across the nation, each year thousands of women and men gain hope for their future. Visit [wmu.com/christianjobcorps](http://wmu.com/christianjobcorps) to learn how you can become involved.

## WorldCrafts

WorldCrafts is the fair-trade division of national WMU. Its vision is to offer an income with dignity and the hope of everlasting life to every person on earth. To accomplish this vision, WorldCrafts develops sustainable fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the world. Visit [WorldCrafts.org](http://WorldCrafts.org) for more information.

## Pure Water, Pure Love (PWPL)

PWPL has a three-fold mission:

- supply missionaries with water filters
- provide the people they serve with wells that offer clean water
- supply missions teams with water filters for use on short-term missions trips

Visit [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl) to learn how you can help.

## Resources for Missions Groups

Resources for preschool, children, students, and adults are all available at [wmu.com](http://wmu.com).



## For New Customers

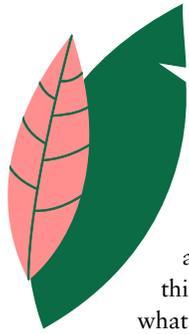
Enjoy 20% off with a special introductory offer for your first year by ordering at the link below or call 1-800-968-7301. (Some restrictions apply. Discount not available at [wmu.com](http://wmu.com).)

<https://tinyurl.com/WMUProducts>

## DEVOTION

# Constant in Prayer

By Carolyn Porterfield



Recorded in Luke 18:1–8, Jesus used a parable to teach about prayer. This parable appears to contain two elements.

A widow seeking justice implored an unjust judge for help. The widow had no authority or power to move the heart of this judge, who neither feared God nor cared what people thought of him.

The judge refused her pleas multiple times.

Imagine how humiliating and frustrating it must have been to go before this indifferent judge so many times. The only thing she could do to receive the justice she sought was to be persistent in asking. Finally, the judge relented and gave the widow the justice she was seeking.

## How We Pray

Jesus used this parable to teach His followers to be constant in prayer. As we pray, we are coming to the One who hears our cries and is ready to respond. Jesus was constant in prayer. That intimate connection with the Father enabled Him to do what the Father wanted Him to be about. The early church was also constant in prayer (Acts 1:14 and 2:42), and the Holy Spirit guided it in sharing the good news throughout its world. Paul constantly prayed for believers in the churches being planted. (See 2 Timothy 1:3; Colossians 1:3–4; and Philippians 1:4–5.)

We, too, are to be constant in prayer as we spend time with our Heavenly Father. Think of those partners in the gospel for whom you can be constant in prayer.

## What We Pray For

Read Luke 18:1–8 again, and notice what specifically the widow was praying for—justice. Isaiah 1:17 and Micah 6:8 help us understand that justice works against oppression, seeks what is right, and is what God requires of those who follow Him. Unlike the unjust judge, Psalm 97:2 tells us righteousness and justice are the foundation of the throne of God.

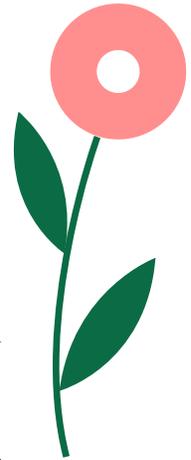
We live in a world filled with injustice. Many are forced to flee their homes and countries because of dangerous and unjust circumstances. These refugees are seeking a safe place to live and raise their families without fear of harm. Many people also become victims of human trafficking each year and are forced to live as slaves with little hope of freedom.

What other examples of injustice do you know? How can you be constant in prayer for those seeking justice?

Use these devotional thoughts in your WMU leadership team meeting to be constant in prayer for partners in the gospel and for justice to be accomplished in unjust situations in our world. Create a specific list of individuals and needs you will pray for over the next three months. Share that list with members who are not present. Memorize Micah 6:8, and pray constantly these words would shape your character.

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Carolyn Porterfield has helped raise awareness of human trafficking in Texas and has worked with refugees who have settled in Dallas.





# Leadership Team Meeting Plans

By Dr. Liz Encinia

SPRING

After a few months of gray skies, most everyone is ready for spring. The sense of newness can bring about excitement for a new season of WMU. As you begin your planning, consider identifying ways you can involve new church members in missions. Perhaps you have been thinking about a new way to engage younger women or to promote the upcoming missions offering. Try something new, and if it doesn't work out how you hoped, then try something different.

Coordinate with church staff to come alongside them in ministry. Are there mission trips coming up that need prayer support? Is there a compassion ministry you have yet to share with others? Ask the Lord to guide your team and provide opportunities to lead your church in strengthening its approach to missions.

## Devotional: Constant in Prayer

Guide your team to read Luke 18:1–8. Highlight what Scripture says about being constant in prayer and how this discipline can impact lives. Utilize the devotional on page 56 to guide your time. Use the missionary prayer calendar found in *Missions Mosaic* or at [wmu.com/prayercalendar](http://wmu.com/prayercalendar). If your convention keeps a list of state missionary birthdays, include its list in your prayertime.

## North American Missions Emphasis

With churches in most cities of North America, it is challenging to grasp the depth of lostness on this side of the world. No matter the advancements in technology, agriculture, and living conditions, North America needs spiritual, physical, and emotional healing. As you lead your church to give and pray for missions efforts in North America, it is important to stress the call on our lives to go and make disciples in our own Judea. The Week of Prayer for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering help churches do just that. We must pray, give, and go. Digital resources and videos are available at [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com). Contact your state WMU to order promotional materials, prayer guides, and offering envelopes. Learn more about the Week of Prayer for North American Missions on page 58.

## World Water Day

March 22 is recognized around the world as World Water Day. Through compassion ministries like Pure Water, Pure Love, WMU is doing its part to bring clean and safe water to all people. Create awareness and lead your church to join in helping provide clean water to families around the world in Jesus' name. For more information about addressing this crisis, flip to page 59.

## World Fair Trade Day

Have you ever considered how an item was produced or how the people who made it were treated during that process? As Christ followers, we should care about integrity in trading goods. Each May 14, World Fair Trade Day is recognized to highlight efforts in bringing hope to artisans around the world. Several ministry partners, including WorldCrafts, work to help restore dignity to the impoverished through the lens of the Great Commission. Resources to help your church pray and support fair-trade artisans are found on page 60.

## Recognition Service

Awards and badges are a great incentive for children and youth to grow in missions discipleship and develop their spiritual growth, evangelism skills, and missions efforts. It displays to the church their involvement in the work of the church and their commitment to the Great Commission. As students are often recognized for their academic achievements during the month of May, why not plan a special day to recognize their participation in the things of the Lord? Order badges/patches, sashes, charms, and other items. Need ideas? Find suggestions on page 62.

## Suggested Meeting Agenda

Lead devotional and prayertime.

Hear reports from leadership team members and church staff.

Finalize plans for quarterly emphases:

- North American Missions Emphasis
- World Water Day
- World Fair Trade Day
- Recognition Service

Set date for next leadership team meeting.

## Missions Growth Idea

Keep in mind that missions education and creating awareness for critical issues should lead others toward personal service. Include a call to action, and provide an opportunity for the church to respond. If the church is unaware of the critical needs in its community, help bring attention to areas of darkness right at its doorstep that needs the hope of the gospel.

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Dr. Liz Encinia is the executive director-treasurer of Kentucky WMU. She has a passion for leadership development and strategic planning. This passion led her to complete a doctorate of strategic leadership from Regent University in 2020. Liz has worked on state WMU staff for 13 years.

## CULTURES

# What Time Is It?

By Carol Ghattas



SPRING

My mother was always early to everything. I don't know how she did it with work and five children, but she did. Not only that—I never saw her waste time. She would fold clothes or type catalog cards while watching a baseball game. I never saw her just relax. She used every minute she had to the max.

It's hard to unlearn something so ingrained in your psyche, so when I traveled to West Africa for a two-year missions assignment, I hit a time-warp brick wall. Here I was, the time-focused perfectionist, moving to a relational, relaxed culture. If that wasn't a rude enough awakening, I would later marry an Egyptian and serve the next 20 years in the Middle East. What do you do when you have plans with people to come for dinner at 6 and they show up at 8:30? Makes for some dry meat, cold meals, and a cranky hostess, to say the least.

What was ingrained in me looked a lot different from those in African and Middle Eastern cultures. Our concept of time travels with us, whether it's me in their country or them in mine. Why can't we see time the same way? Because cultures are different.

While some generalities can be made about warm (relational) and cold (time-oriented) cultures, no one size fits all when it relates to time. I like to look at the idea of an onion culture versus a straight-line culture. The West (with some exceptions in various US regions) takes a linear view of time. Those in the West plan days and years and thrive on calendars and strategic plans. In the onion culture, the thinking is more in layers, and people react to situations instead of working toward

How different cultures deal with weddings is a good example. In the Middle East, if I was invited to a wedding, then I would leave my house at the time on the invitation. I wouldn't miss much, even if it had already started when I got there. That's an easy assumption when I'm in the Middle East and weddings last several hours. But if I'm going to a wedding in Tennessee, the ceremony would be done and cake almost eaten if I don't get there within the hour.

Knowing time is different for different cultures can help you perform ministry better, both there and here. Time can cause major problems for onion-culture immigrants to time-conscious countries. Be a friend who can help them adjust to get to work, school, or church on time. Help them see the importance of time in your country while remembering the importance of relationships in theirs.

How do you find balance in cross-cultural relationships? Enter into a conversation with your friends. Ask them what their customs are and help them understand yours. It helps to give a range of time you can visit with them. Even if they're late, then they know you've blocked off a specific amount of time just for them. Focus on the person and not your watch, remembering, above all, God calls us to relationships with Him and others. Time is in His hands.

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Carol Ghattas has learned to be flexible as she has served cross-culturally for more than 30 years. She is now a librarian, author, and speaker. Connect with her at [lifeinexile.net](http://lifeinexile.net) or [carolghattas@gmail.com](mailto:carolghattas@gmail.com).

Week of Prayer and Mission Study for North American Missions  
and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering | March 5–12

# Learners Pray; Praying People Give

By Claudean Boatman

SPRING

Each spring, Southern Baptist churches observe the Week of Prayer and Mission Study for North American Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. Congregations learn how North American church planters and missionaries take Jesus to an increasingly secular culture. Learners become people who pray. People who pray give sacrificially. In response, God changes eternity for those who receive the gospel. Intentionally engage your church with the gospel need of North America during the week of prayer, March 5–12.

## Two Months Prior

Begin planning in January. A planning guide can be found at [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com). This checklist provides some additional ideas.

- Pray about your church's involvement in the week of prayer and willingness to give.
- Enlist leaders and other workers for age-level mission studies.
- Set a date for the mission studies, and secure the needed space.
- Visit [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com) to order or download resources, including videos, sample sermons, prayer guides, envelopes, and a promotion kit. Use these to help you plan an interactive, fun, and informative emphasis.
- Order resources from [wmustore.com/missions-resources/annie-armstrong](http://wmustore.com/missions-resources/annie-armstrong) to help your church learn about Annie Armstrong and how the week of prayer continues her legacy of mission support.

## One Month Prior

- Use the planning guide and promotion kit available at [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com) to guide your preparation and advertising.
- Show videos from [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com) in February and March. Let your congregation know there will be an opportunity to respond through giving during the Week of Prayer for North American Missions.
- Hang posters advertising the North American Mission Study throughout the church.
- Advertise the mission study on your church's website, social media pages, and other avenues

you have available. Visit Bible studies, children's classes, and small groups to issue invitations.

## Month of Emphasis

During the week of prayer, focus your church on learning, praying, and giving. Intentionally engage your congregation with the opportunity to give to North American Missions.

- Conduct the North American Mission Study. Make it a celebration of God's work in North America.
- Introduce Annie Armstrong with monologues and printed materials available through WMU.
- Enlist a church planter or Send Relief missionary to speak on the importance of gospel engagement in North America.
- Use the prayer guides available at [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com) to inform prayertimes.
- Schedule prayertimes for North American missions. Consider 24-hour prayer events, afternoon guided prayertimes, and whole-congregation prayer during worship.

## Make Missions Come Alive

Engage your families or missions groups in community outreach. Consider these ideas.

- Prayerwalk the neighborhood around a new church plant. Meet with the church planter to learn his requests and pray with him. Mark a map showing where you prayed.
- Help a ministry center with food distribution, clothing drives, craft classes, packing backpacks, or whatever they need. Plan ahead to ensure you possess the necessary materials.
- Adopt church planters, their wives, or children in your area. Assemble gift bags that include restaurant cards, encouraging notes, everyday items such as lip balm, and individually wrapped food treats.

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Claudean Boatman is the volunteer Colorado Baptist WMU executive director. She writes children's missions curriculum for WMU and has taught children about missions for most of her adulthood.

World Water Day | March 22

# Pure Water, Pure Love in Jesus' Name

By Diana C. Derringer

According to water.org, a global nonprofit agency committed to making water and sanitation available to everyone, 771 million people lack access to safe water. March 22, World Water Day, focuses on the value and safeguarding of water for the world.

The threefold mission of the WMU Compassion Ministry Pure Water, Pure Love (PWPL) is to supply missionaries with water filters, the people they serve with wells that offer clean water, and missions teams with water filters for use on short-term mission trips. The gift of clean water often increases receptiveness to the greater gift of the Living Water.

## Two Months Prior

- Set a date for a World Water Day dinner and program, and add it to the church calendar.
- Plan and assign responsibilities for the program.
- Arrange a beans and rice dinner with a choice of clean or dirty water (tea) to drink.
- Seek volunteers for meal preparation.
- Recruit water servers for the meal and end of the program.
- Enlist someone to role-play crawling across a desert, calling out, “Water, water,” followed by an explanation that although many people have access to water, unclean sources often lead to disease, parasites, and death. Conclude with a summary of the World Water Day 2021 article found at [wmu.com/world-water-day-2021](http://wmu.com/world-water-day-2021).
- Coordinate with church staff to share information about and collect an offering for PWPL during a worship service. Include the video found at [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl).

## One Month Prior

- Prepare copies of PWPL bulletin inserts for a worship service and fliers for the dinner found at [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl).
- Collect old mismatched, cracked, and stained bowls or cups and clean rags as napkins for the meal.

## Month of Emphasis

- Assist church staff with PWPL bulletin inserts.
- Provide a brief overview of PWPL during a church service, introduced by the video. Extend an invitation to the World Water Day dinner. Collect a PWPL offering.
- Distribute copies of the PWPL flier to dinner participants as they arrive.
- Begin the dinner with prayer for PWPL.
- Cue the role-play actor to crawl across the floor calling for water. After she reaches the microphone, she stands and explains that although many people have access to water, unclean water often leads to disease, parasites, and death. She then summarizes the World Water Day 2021 article.
- Serve the beans and rice dinner. Servers offer a pitcher of dirty water (tea) or a pitcher of clean water.
- Challenge participants to consider how it must feel to have a choice of no water or dirty water with the risk of disease or parasites. Clarify the dirty water is tea and is safe to drink for those who want it.
- Following the dinner, review the PDF of PWPL basic information found at [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl) under the “What is PWPL?” tab.
- Brainstorm future PWPL projects.
- Refill water cups while saying, “Enjoy a drink of pure water in Jesus’ name.” (*Option:* Distribute water bottles with PWPL labels attached—labels can be found at [wmu.com/pwpl](http://wmu.com/pwpl) under the “Promote and Engage” tab.)
- Station servers with empty water pitchers at each exit for PWPL offerings.

SPRING

Diana Derringer has enjoyed the fellowship, meals, and fresh water provided by faithful believers while serving on several international mission trips.

World Fair Trade Day | May 13

# We Make a Great Team

By Cindy Lewis Dake

“Everybody, play fair!” I remember hearing this shouted across the playground during recess as we played red rover and softball. We expected everyone to play fair so each person would have a chance to do his or her best.

If only we could shout out the same thing and the world would play fair too. But many people, especially women in the most hopeless situations, are given few resources to provide for themselves and their families. That’s where fair-trade initiatives can literally change people’s lives and bring hope for the future and provision for the present. Learning a skill, being part of a nurturing community, and obtaining an avenue for selling their products for a fair price—these are answers to their prayers.

SPRING

World Fair Trade Day is an opportunity for your members to learn of the challenges faced by people all around the world, as well as how WorldCrafts works with nearly 50 artisan groups representing thousands of people across more than 20 countries.

You can shop for the artisans’ products at WorldCrafts.org. But more than simply buying their products, you can give your church members deeper insight into the people who produce these items so they can pray for the hands that perform the work and the hearts that seek hope. Visit WorldCrafts.org/artisans to learn more about each artisan group.

## Two Months Prior

- Start by praying for guidance.
- Visit WorldCrafts.org/our-impact and read Our Story, FAQs, and Fair Trade, and watch the two short videos. WorldCrafts partners with artisan leaders around the world who abide by the fair trade principles.
- Consider purchasing the online minicourse *WorldCrafts: An Overview* at christianleaderlearning.com/courses/worldcrafts-an-overview to learn more about this ministry.
- Follow WorldCrafts on Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter.
- Consider hosting a benefit that will give 20 percent of your event’s proceeds to your local

Christian Women’s Job Corp/Christian Men’s Job Corp (WorldCrafts.org/cwjc-cmjc-benefit), Lifeline Children’s Services (WorldCrafts.org/lifeline), or Baptist Children and Family Ministries (WorldCrafts.org/bcfm).

- Consider different ways you can personalize a WorldCrafts event, like a pre-Mother’s Day celebration for all women and girls, a virtual market (WorldCrafts.org/virtualmarket) for those who can’t attend in person, or a pre-Christmas market featuring WorldCrafts Christmas products and gift ideas from around the world.

## One Month Prior

- Visit WorldCrafts.org/teach for resources for preschoolers, children, students, and adults, including free videos, 30-minute teaching plans, games, recipes, posters, flyers, and more. Customize your approach for each audience. Everyone can learn from the moving stories of rescue and renewal, as well as how to pray for the people.
- Share plans with teachers and leaders. Help them embrace the heart of WorldCrafts ministries by learning the artisans’ stories.
- Go to WorldCrafts.org/pray, and click through the daily prayer calendars to glean artisans’ stories to share.
- Design and print handouts or posters. See the “Support Freedom” tab at WorldCrafts.org for a print-ready brochure (“Call to Action” and “Prayer Guide”).
- Begin publicity in church publications and on walls and bulletin boards.

## Month of Emphasis

- Continue publicizing the event.
- Finalize teaching plans for each age level.
- Complete event plans.

Cindy Lewis Dake (cindydake.com) was the editor of *Missions Mosaic* when WMU officially launched WorldCrafts in 1996. Her favorite WorldCrafts items are the Christmas nativities and any jewelry with beads.



*WorldCrafts always pays its artisans in full. WorldCrafts artisans receive a fair wage for every piece whether it sells or not. WorldCrafts also pays all shipping and customs charges, and its utmost concern is holistic lifestyle improvement for the artisans.*



## Support WorldCrafts Artisans around the World!

WorldCrafts, a compassion ministry of WMU, develops sustainable, fair-trade businesses among impoverished people around the world.

Each WorldCrafts product represents a life changed by the opportunity to earn an income with dignity and to hear the offer of eternal hope.

Visit [WorldCrafts.org](http://WorldCrafts.org) to learn more about our artisan partners, shop their handmade products, and find ways you can share about WorldCrafts with others.

**WORLD CRAFTS**<sup>SM</sup>

Committed. Holistic. Fair Trade.

[WorldCrafts.org](http://WorldCrafts.org) 1-800-968-7301



WorldCrafts is a compassion ministry of WMU®.

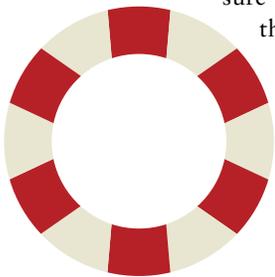
## RECOGNITION SERVICE

# A Lighthouse in My Community: Jesus Offers Hope and Joy

By Judith K. Moore



## SPRING



As you prepare for this special recognition service for children, consider not just the program but also creating an atmosphere for focusing on the children's achievements in an enjoyable setting. Be sure to share with the congregation exactly who the children are and what groups they represent (Girls in Action, Royal Ambassadors, or Children in Action). These groups may be new to some people in your church and will help them to understand what the children are learning.

Plan in advance to create and provide nautical decorations depending on the option chosen. Aid the children in preparing to share Scripture passages, projects, missionary information, award badges, etc. Help them to write what they want to say so the fear factor will be lessened. If a younger child does not want to speak, partner him or her with an older child who will do the speaking.

Flags could be made from fabric or paper representing the locations studied during the past year. Provide a child with a file card to share one fact he or she learned during the study. The information does not have to be memorized. Remember to use microphones with the children so all the attendees can hear clearly.

Allow the children to create their own lighthouse decorations. These can be small (cardstock size) or large (poster board) depending on the setting. As each lighthouse has distinct colors, guide the children to choose two of their favorite colors to create their own lighthouse. Their name should be added to the front of the lighthouse if displayed or presented before the



congregation. Consider using real lighthouse souvenirs/collections if a church member has some and will lend them. Otherwise, create lighthouses out of potato chip cans with a battery-style tea light glued on top. Plastic detergent caps can be placed over the tea lights to look more like a lighthouse. The children can help with creating these in advance. Other useful items would be ropes, fishnets, blue paper for waves, etc.

Following are two options that may be adapted or combined to create the best recognition service for your children.

### Nautical Banquet

Hold the recognition service in the fellowship hall. The church is invited to recognize the children's accomplishments with a full meal or just some light refreshments.

Try these suggested nautical refreshments:

- croissant sandwiches (ham, chicken, or tuna salad)
- hot dogs sliced in the shape of an octopus, served with condiments
- "sea snails" (pigs in a blanket)
- seashell pasta salad
- "seaweed dip" (spinach, dill) for crudité's presented in a lighthouse or anchor shape
- deviled egg "boats" with cheese triangle "sail"
- "ocean water" (blue punch with gummy fish)
- saltwater taffy
- lighthouse-shaped cookies
- watermelon or cantaloupe wedges with paper sails





### Church Recognition Service

The church body could observe and participate in a worship service incorporating the recognition of the children and their accomplishments. Your order of service will depend on the size of your missions group and adaptations that need to be made. See the following suggestions.

#### Order of Service

**Music:** Play background music or have a musician play live music as people arrive.

**Welcome:** Invite a church staff member to speak.

**Prayer:** Enlist a missions leader to lead.

**Congregational Song:** “The Solid Rock”

**Scripture:** Ask an older child to read Romans 12:12.

**Pledges:** Guide children to participate in whatever group pledges are used in your church.

**Theme Adaptation:** Call on a missions leader to explain. For example: Say, *This year we are using the nautical theme of a lighthouse to recognize our children. Lighthouses have been very important in the history of the world. The earliest known lighthouse was in Egypt more than 2,000 years ago. Lighthouses were used to warn people of treacherous rock formations, and the light was used to guide ships into safe waters. Today, we desire for our children to be the lighthouses that guide their friends in our community to Jesus. Jesus will be the hope to cling to when troubled times occur. Hope in Jesus brings joy, and we wish this joy for our children.*

**Special Music:** “The Lighthouse” by Ronnie Hinson

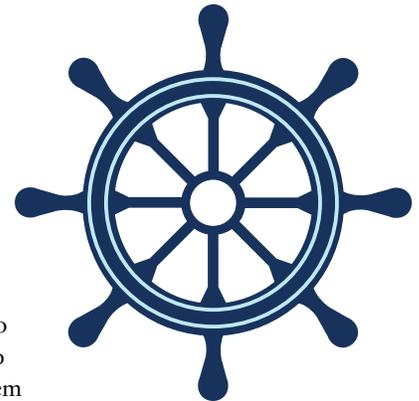
**Explanation by Leader(s):** Allow a leader of each to explain his or her group’s purpose.

This may be done prior to individual recognition. (Example: If both GA and RA groups meet, invite one leader to explain GAs, then present the girls and their accomplishments. Then allow the RA leader to do the same.)



#### Presentation of Awards and Recognitions:

Create an order of presentation, and practice with the children in advance of the service. This will guide them to where they need to sit and when they will need to go forward, and it will also help them practice their part. This should help allay any fears.



**Congregational Song:** “The Light of the World Is Jesus”

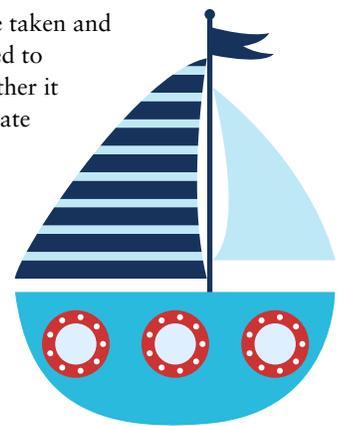
**Offering:** Explain that an offering will be taken and the purpose of that offering. You may need to briefly explain the offering recipient, whether it is for a particular missionary request, a state mission, a Christmas in August need, etc. Be clear with the congregation that the money collected will go to a missions endeavor and not be for the group.

**Thank You:** Express gratitude to the children for their hard work, the leaders for their instruction, and the church for providing the facilities, supplies, and guidance for the missions groups.

**Closing Song:** “This Little Light of Mine” (This might be a time to let just the children sing if they are willing or invite the congregation to join.)

#### Final Prayer

Judith K. Moore praises God for gifting her with a passion for teaching, writing, and missions. She has taught in all WMU organizations, led conferences in several states, and participated in a lifelong goal of a mission trip to Paris, France.



## BUILDING YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

# Building a Team to Advance the Gospel

By Amy Cordova

SPRING

Do you ever feel as though if you want something done right, you must do it yourself? Perhaps that's helpful in the short-term, but in the long-term weariness will set in and growth will stifle. Scripture teaches us the importance of doing the work of the ministry together in community. The church is designed to encourage each member to exercise God-given gifts to build the kingdom.

## Joy in Partnership

Paul's letters to the early church are full of instructions to encourage one another as they viewed each other as partners in advancing the gospel. We see this team approach in ministry modeled in Paul's writings. Even under house arrest, Paul wrote to the church at Philippi with great joy: "I give thanks to my God for every remembrance of you, always praying with joy for all of you in my every prayer, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:3–5 CSB). We know the end of Paul's life was near as he wrote this letter. He had experienced extreme hardship, but his deep affection for the church remained evident. He had great joy knowing they were continuing the work to proclaim Christ.

Anytime people come together to accomplish a task, it can be messy. Too often we become territorial or think our way is the only way. Paul taught the importance of collaboration. The church must be active in bringing others into the work to continue the work. When we intentionally serve together, the impact is greater and long lasting.

## Four Qualities to Look for in Building a Team

Now that we have laid the foundation of why we do this work together, let's talk practically about how. How do you build a team? Who do you recruit? What values or qualities can you intentionally look for?

### Character: Inward and Outward

Matthew 23:27–28

The first quality to evaluate while recruiting team members is character. Character matters! While praying to discern who to bring on to your leadership team,

an easy first choice is a vibrant, competent leader. These are desirable qualities to enhance the impact of leadership in the church. However, it is important to first consider a person's character. If outward and inward character does not reflect the fruit of the Spirit, that should be a warning. Jesus called this disconnect hypocrisy or whitewashed tombs. Outwardly, a person may seem to be full of life, but behind closed doors his or her life may be full of sin and impurity.

Character is a quality that only the Holy Spirit can produce. True inward character cannot be forced into the heart. Be careful to not trade a dynamic, influential leader for a lack of godly character.

### Chemistry: Unity in Christ

2 Corinthians 13:11

When building a team, chemistry is an important attribute to take into consideration. There is great value when all members of the team work to accomplish the same mission and vision. These shared values develop comradery.

Someone who gets the job done might have great character, but it's important to evaluate whether a connection to the culture of the ministry is apparent. This does not mean everyone on your team needs to look or think like you. Marriage is a prime example of this diverse yet unifying concept. Opposites attract! God often brings people into our lives with different backgrounds, interests, and personalities. Yet strong chemistry conveys a shared vision and values that provide a solid foundation for unity. These shared values will develop priorities within the ministry that will be a catalyst for long-term growth.

### Commitment: Spend and Be Spent

2 Corinthians 12:15

Paul was careful to never be a burden to those around him. He worked hard to earn his own wages and be content in everything. He was not trying to get something from anyone. He desired to build a relationship to encourage believers in their faith.

Paul's characteristics in his commitment to the church are the type of leader you should look for when developing a team. A great leader is not afraid

to get dirt under his or her nails. That person is not looking for a trophy or platform. Instead, a great team member is someone who will humbly serve, continue the work when times get tough, and submit to the leadership of the church.

### Competency: Skilled Craftsmen

Exodus 18:13–26

Considering someone's skill set is the last characteristic to evaluate when developing a team. Skills are valuable when selecting leaders, but they can be developed. We are called to affirm and encourage gifts to be exercised in the church. When selecting a leader, do not feel as though his or her gifts need to be seasoned with years of experience. Bring leaders alongside you, and provide opportunities for learning and growth. Over time, their God-given gifts and abilities will be perfected.

### Beware of Comparison: The Thief of Unity

Comparison can easily creep into ministry and divide a team. Do not allow comparison to steal and destroy the unity of believers. Instead, develop a culture that rejoices in the opportunities and development of other leaders. Remember, raising up leaders to serve alongside you is not a threat to your leadership. In fact, it could be one of your greatest achievements.

### Practical Steps to Building Your Team

- **Pray.** Prayer is an action. Pray God would provide a team of effective leaders.
- **Determine your values, then recruit your team.**
- **Design your team to look like the people you are called to reach.** Consider various demographics such as geography (urban and rural), generations, ethnicity, culture, and socioeconomics.
- **Develop your leaders through WMU's Christian Women's Leadership Center.** Visit [christianleaderlearning.com](http://christianleaderlearning.com) for online courses that provide a wealth of information and helpful direction in developing your leadership team.

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Amy Cordova serves Oklahoma Baptists as the missions and women's ministry partner and Oklahoma WMU executive director, where she encourages women in the local church to advance the gospel.

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