

Why Missions Discipleship Is Important for Adults

“Adults on Mission has been instrumental in keeping our church informed about local and international missions needs and encouraging the members to support missions offerings.”

– Sylvia Todd

Missions discipleship empowers adults to become more effective witnesses in their world. When adults explore current missions efforts around the world, delve into the biblical mandate for missions, and become personally involved, they clearly see their responsibility to take the gospel to the nations.

As adults grow and learn, they will seek out needs in their communities and become involved in meeting those needs. A commonly asked question is, “How is God calling us to meet this need?”

The goals of Adults on Mission are to learn about missions, pray for and give to missions, and disciple others to live on mission for Christ.



Table of Contents

- [What is Adults on Mission?](#) 2
- [Resources for Adults](#) 3
- [Sample Session](#) 4

What is Adults on Mission?



Adults on Mission is a coed organization for women and men over 18 years old. This missions discipleship group prepares men and women to work together to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and to hear God's call.

Most Adults on Mission groups are activity-based, so the groups can be formed to meet an identified need in your community or when an existing small group decides to become involved in missions. Groups can also be formed around natural networks or affiliations (such as professions) or around life issues (such as parenting or retirement).

For more information about starting Adults on Mission, visit wmu.com/adults (select "Adults on Mission").

To learn more about leading Adults on Mission, visit wmu.com/howtoleadadults.

Join our online community:
facebook.com/NationalWMU
instagram.com/NationalWMU
twitter.com/NationalWMU

How to Start Adults on Mission

- 1. Pray.** Involve your church leadership in seeking direction for starting and leading Adults on Mission.
- 2. Determine the focus.** Consult with women and men in the church to choose what your focus will be.
- 3. Identify leaders.** Select a group leader and others who will be willing to lead and provide training.
- 4. Choose resources.** Review the sample included in this starter pack and talk to others about the options.
- 5. Order resources.** Place orders at wmu.com or call 1-800-968-7301.
- 6. Check the calendar.** Select a meeting time and location.
- 7. Promote.** Promote 6–8 weeks prior to your first meeting using personal invitations, email, social media, and print format.

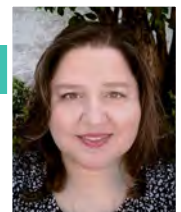
We're here to help!

For questions about starting or leading Adults on Mission:

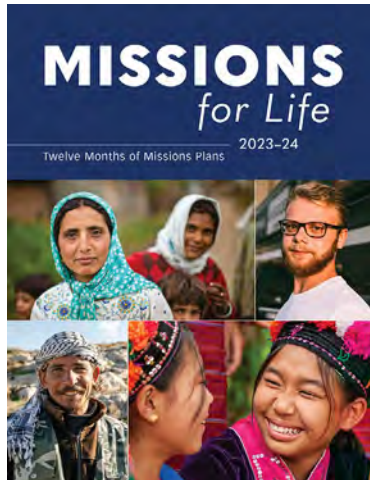
National WMU: Contact Stephanie Newton, lead strategist for adults and multicultural audiences, at snewton@wmu.org or (205) 991-4017.

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.



Resources for Adults



Missions for Life 2023-24

Each of Missions for Life's 12 monthly units includes a Bible study and Bible study lesson plan, a prayer article, suggestions for mission action projects, and ideas for getting involved in a special monthly emphasis, such as the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. You will also receive access to a special monthly online mission study and mission study lesson plan.

Order one per leader.

Print: \$21.99 • W233120

Digital: \$19.99 • E233119



Missions Mosaic

Explore. Build. Pursue. *Missions Mosaic* guides you to explore discipleship, build a biblical worldview of God's missions purpose, and pursue an unshakable relationship with Him. Each monthly issue will equip you with a Bible study, a prayer starter, ministry ideas, evangelism tools, and Prayer Patterns—daily devotions followed by the names of missionaries listed by their birthdays.

Order one per person.

Annual subscription (12 monthly issues):

- Print: \$24.99
- Digital: \$22.99
- Digital/Print Bundle: \$26.99

New Customers: Save 20% Today!

Ready to get started and be on mission? **Enjoy 20% savings** on your **new curriculum order** by calling WMU Customer Service at 1-800-968-7301, Monday–Thursday, 8:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m. CT. Be sure to mention promo code **START20**. (Some restrictions apply. Discount not available at wmustore.com.)

SAMPLE

Atlanta, Georgia

REACHING THE CREATIVE FOR THE CREATOR IS the mission of Kerry and Twyla Jackson, two Evangelism Catalyst missionaries in Atlanta, Georgia. They explained, “Our love for Christ inspires us to find creative ways to serve the artists He places in our lives.” And that’s just what they have done. They share gospel truths in their live art performances and reach into the creative community in Atlanta by providing weekly

Bible study and discipleship opportunities. Despite opposition, they have seen lives changed for Christ. Artists who have been impacted by their ministry are now using their gifts to share their faith as well. In the Jacksons’ words, “It is so rewarding to see those who first come to know Him follow through in baptism but also to see them come to understand that they are gifted in art for a reason.”

Visit wmu.com/missionsforlife2324 to download your mission study about Atlanta, Georgia. The mission study and lesson plan will be available 8/1/2023.

Password:
A8LnB0sd679





GROWING IN LOVE

John 15:9–13

By Chris Conrades

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.
—John 15:9

I do not consider myself an expert gardener, but I love flowers and watching them bloom each year. Each spring, I anticipate new growth and watch in wonder as flowers bloom and decorate the landscape. I have perennial flowers that return each year and bring stability to my garden. I have annuals I can change each year with new colors or flower choices. I also currently have a collection of cacti that I am flower sitting for a neighbor while she settles into a new home. Each type of plant is different and brings different benefits to my garden, but there are a few things they all have in common. They have specific needs in order to grow: water, sunlight, and good soil.

We are similar to the flowers in my garden. We are each different in many ways, but there are a few things we need to grow in Christlike love. Let's take a look at John 15:9–13 and see what Jesus said about how to grow in love.

REMAIN IN CHRIST'S LOVE.

Jesus used the example of a vine to describe how we are to remain in Him and in His love. A branch cannot stay alive and growing if it is disconnected from the main vine. Have you ever seen a tree branch that is damaged but not quite disconnected from the rest of the tree? In a few days, that branch will begin to die and become brown, alerting you to the fact that it was cut from its life source, the trunk of the tree. Even though it appears to still be connected, it cannot survive.

If we want to grow in love and imitate the love of Christ, we must first make sure we remain connected to Him. We must fix our minds on Him and not on the distractions of the world. We need to plant our hearts and desires in the words of the Bible. We need to abide in Him by intentionally studying the Bible and reflecting on what we are learning. The first step to growing in love is to be rooted in the love Christ has for us.



HOLD FAST TO CHRIST'S COMMANDS.

In John 15:10, Jesus told His disciples, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love." In the previous verse, Jesus instructed them to "remain in my love" (v. 9). Here in verse 10, He said how a person can remain in Him. It is not as difficult as we might try to make it. It is not a fancy formula. It is just simply to obey. If we want to grow in Christlike love, we need to hold fast to His teachings in the Bible and obey them.

It is important to recognize the obedience Christ is talking about here is not a drudgery to be completed to earn extra favor with God or achieve higher ranking than a fellow Christian. It does not add to our salvation; rather, this obedience is an outpouring of our love for Christ. As we learn more about Jesus, we desire to be like Him in every way, including obeying the commands found in the Bible. As we grow in our love of Christ, we will grow in our desire to be like Him in our actions.

DWELL IN CHRIST'S JOY.

One of my favorite parts of growing a garden is when I am able to see a new bud has opened into a beautiful flower. This flower represents the end of a long cycle that began underground, out of sight. After the roots were established, the plant worked hard to produce this flower. It truly fills my heart with joy to see the beauty created.

Jesus told us in John 15:11, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." When we abide in Him and obey His commands, we begin

to be filled with His joy. This is not just earthly happiness that depends on outside circumstances or feelings. This joy is deep contentment, calm delight, and gladness rooted in the person and character of God. As we grow in Christlike love, we will be filled with Christ's joy.

FOLLOW CHRIST'S EXAMPLE.

Christ commanded us, "Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:12-13). As we abide in Him through Bible study, prayer, and obedience, His love will spill out of us. Jesus provided the perfect example of how to love by how He lived His life here on earth. He served with humility, He ate with those who may have appeared unlovable, and He healed both physical and spiritual needs everywhere He went. Jesus ultimately gave up His life for ours so we could be reconciled back to God.

As we grow in Christlike love, we will be driven outside of our comfort zones to display love in ways that challenge societal norms. We will be called to go to difficult places and share Christ's story of grace and forgiveness in our lives with those who desperately need to hear it. We will be given the opportunity to lay aside our desires and needs for the sake of others. In following Christ's example, we will grow in love and lay down our lives for our friends.

Chris Conrades is a mom of four and a pastor's wife who has been in ministry for 22 years. She is president of Indiana WMU and is passionate about serving others in ministry.





Growing in Love: John 15:9–13

By Chris Conrades



FOR GROUP OR CHURCHWIDE STUDY:

1. Start by sharing a story of a time someone gave up his or her life for a friend. If you do not have a personal story to share, research stories of soldiers, public safety officers, or missionaries.
2. Read John 15:9–13 together as a group.
3. Ask, *How do we abide in the love of Jesus? How did Jesus demonstrate His love for others, and what commands has He given us?* (See Matthew 28:18–20 and John 15:12.)
4. Ask, *How can you show love to others in your home, in your workplace, or in your community?*
5. Ask a volunteer to read Philippians 2:3–8 aloud. Discuss the importance of imitating Christ in our acts of love.
6. Pray together, and ask God to help you grow in your love for others.



FOR FAMILY STUDY:

1. Purchase tulip or daffodil bulbs to plant together. If you have a yard, you can plant the bulbs in the ground. If not, you can plant them in pots.
2. As a family, talk about what is needed for plants to grow.
3. Ask, *What will help us grow in our love for Jesus and others?*
4. Read John 15:9–13 together.
5. Explain how remaining in Jesus' love is like being planted in His love. When we focus on Jesus and on obeying His commands, we can grow in our love for Him. As we grow in Him, we are better able to show love to others. The love we show is like a flower that grows from a plant.
6. Together, pray God would help you grow in focusing on Him, obeying Him, and loving one another.



FOR INDIVIDUAL STUDY:

1. Read John 15:9–13, and pray God would give you understanding as you read.
2. Reread John 15:11. On a sheet of paper, write the word *joy*. Draw two columns. On one side, write things the world says should bring us joy, and on the other side, write what brings Jesus joy.
3. True joy is not simply emotional happiness. It is a cheerfulness and calm delight in the character of God no matter our circumstances (see Philippians 4:4–9).
4. Consider whether your confidence is rooted in Jesus or whether you try to find your joy in people or circumstances.
5. As you grow in love, Jesus wants your joy to be made complete in Him. Pray God would help you place your confidence in His character as you love those around you.

Chris Conrades is president of Indiana WMU and is passionate about serving others in ministry.



PRAY TO GROW IN INTIMACY WITH CHRIST

By Nell Branum



But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

—2 Peter 3:18 ESV

What synonyms could you substitute for the word *intimacy*? A thesaurus might reveal words like *familiarity*, *closeness*, or *relationship*. Is it your desire to grow in familiarity with Christ, in closeness with Him, and in relationship with Him?

PRAY TO GROW IN FAMILIARITY WITH CHRIST.

If you tried to describe a person you didn't know well, you might be able to recall his or her appearance, job, or family. In contrast, when you describe your sibling, spouse, or best friend, stronger adjectives probably come to mind—funny, dependable, clever, energetic, etc. You likely begin to recall much more—likes and dislikes, typical responses, a family joke, something he always says, how she stood by you in that situation, what hilarious things happened when you went on that trip together. Your relationship can be deeper and more enjoyable when you know the person well.

The same will happen as you grow in your knowledge of Christ. You can discover His personality by studying Scripture. What does He always say? How does He respond to this or that? More personally, His character is revealed when you recollect stories about His goodness and faithfulness in your life. What happened when He walked with you through a difficult situation?

Pray your description of Christ would grow more detailed as you come to know Him better.

PRAY TO GROW IN CLOSENESS WITH CHRIST.

The Bible uses an interesting word to describe closeness with Christ: *abiding*. John 15:4 (ESV) says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself,

unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me."

So how can we abide in Christ? We do this by deciding to depend on Him, to accept His direction, and to make His commands the basis for our life decisions.

It is important to note we cannot abide in Him without knowing Him, nor can we live by His commands without knowing what they are.

Finally, we pray. The more we pray, the more we will find ourselves drawing closer to Christ, abiding in Him.

PRAY TO GROW IN RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.

The more you pray, and the more you recognize Him at work, the more your relationship with Him will grow. And that leads into sweet peace as you follow Him.

Nell Branum is a former WMU editor and elementary school librarian from Alabama who served churches alongside her minister husband for 44 years until his death in 2022. Starting in her preschool years, she has been a lifelong member of WMU organizations, and she is grateful for opportunities that are consistently provided, both for ministry and for spiritual growth.

Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

PRAYER PROMPT

Dear Lord, help me know You well. Help me abide deeply in You and recognize You at work.



FOOD BACKPACKS DELIVER HOPE TO HUNGRY FAMILIES

By Claudean Boatman

Many vulnerable families in the United States struggle to obtain sufficient food to feed themselves and their children—a circumstance called food insecurity. According to the US Department of Agriculture’s 2021 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, food insecurity in the United States grew from 13.6 percent to 14.8 percent between 2019 and 2020. Hispanic households experienced food insecurity at a rate of 12.2 percent, more than 4 percentage points over the previous year. Food insecurity among single-mother households with children was 14.8 percent, nearly double the rate for all households with children.

Food insecurity negatively impacts children academically and socially. From kindergarten to high school, children who do not have enough to eat are at higher risk for repeating grades, lower achievement test scores, and mental or emotional problems. The effects of malnutrition experienced by toddlers and preschoolers can continue as many as ten years later.¹

HOW CAN YOUR CHURCH HELP?

The nonprofit organization Feeding America offers many ways to join in its mission to provide food for hungry children. One way is to provide food backpacks for families. Though at-risk children can receive meals at school, they often go hungry during weekends and school breaks. Feeding America’s backpack program aims to fill this need.

Learn more about this unique program and how to connect to a participating food bank by visiting feedingamerica.org and searching for “backpack program.” Whether it’s making a donation, volunteering to pack and deliver food backpacks, or turning your church into a backpack distribution site, there are many ways you can help.



WHAT IF THERE ARE NO FOOD BANKS NEAR ME?

Consider partnering with a nearby school to fill the food gap. Begin with a food backpack goal that will be manageable for your congregation. Meet with the school principal. Explain what you want to do, and offer your predetermined number of bags. Work within the school’s system to maintain confidentiality. Collect relevant details about each family, including any food allergies or sensitivities. Let the school know the bags should be returned weekly to be refilled.

Engage the entire church in collecting food. Consider rotating menus and including staples that will last multiple days. Designate a storage area for extra food. Schedule weekly packing times. Use the same people to deliver full backpacks and pick up the empty bags at the beginning of each week.

HOW CAN A SMALL GROUP HELP?

Partner with a school to provide lunch money for one or two single-parent families for the rest of the school year. Ask the school to deliver a note that includes your church’s activities for children and parents. Pray for the families who will receive this support.

HOW CAN A FAMILY HELP?

Provide a “celebration in a box” for special occasions that schools can give out at their discretion. Include disposable baking pans and ingredients for a cake or treat.

Claudean Boatman remembers her single mother receiving food baskets that were packed by a local church. Those church volunteers did more than provide food—they invited a little girl to Jesus.

1. Dr. Cindy Gellner, “Lack of Food Can Affect a Child’s Learning Abilities,” *The Scope*, University of Utah Health, December 18, 2018, https://healthcare.utah.edu/the-scope/shows.php?shows=0_06s5mo3y.



BECOME A PEN PAL WITH A MISSIONARY KID

By Adrianna Anderson

Do you remember having a pen pal as a young child and writing to someone you didn't know? Maybe he or she was from a country you had never heard of! Just as you may have made friends through letter writing when you were young, you and your family can support and encourage missionary kids (MKs) by becoming their pen pal today.

MKs, like all children, need encouragement and hope. God loves them, and they need the body of Christ just as much as children who are physically in your church every week. Remember what Jesus says about children: "And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me" (Matt. 18:5).

HOW YOUR FAMILY CAN BECOME PEN PALS WITH A MISSIONARY KID

Though the use of email has made it easier for people to communicate quickly, I challenge you to think about times when you have received a handwritten letter or card. How did it make you feel? Did you think, "Wow, they took the time to handwrite a note for me"? Would you agree there is something special about receiving personal messages of encouragement from people written by hand? Sometimes due to security or location reasons, it may not be possible to send a physical letter to MKs, but when it is, a handwritten note can bring a lot of joy. Here are some tips to help your family become pen pals with an MK:

Partner with Them: Work with your missions pastor to identify local or international missionary kids who need encouragement, and obtain their parents' permission to write to them.

Encourage Them: With your family, pray for the MKs by name, for their family, and for the country in which they are serving. Depending on your children's ages, you and your family can engage with MKs by sending handwritten notes, decorated cards, and drawings with messages of God's love and their worth and value in God's sight. Emphasize that God has a plan for their lives (Jer. 29:11).

Get to Know Them: Celebrate important moments in their lives like birthdays, spiritual milestones, and missionary



DID YOU KNOW?

- » Not all MKs are believers in Christ, and some who are may face a crisis of faith.
- » MKs often feel isolated and alone and sometimes struggle to make friends.
- » MKs are not immune from hurt and pain because their parents are missionaries.

PRAYER PROMPT

Lord, use my family to be a source of friendship and encouragement to a missionary kid today. Amen.

anniversaries. Ask questions to learn more about them, and share fun information about you, your family, and your friends.

Create with Them: You and your children can share your favorite verses or Bible stories. Ask your MK pen pals about other fun and meaningful ways they share their faith.

Scripture says, "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news" (Isa. 52:7). Would your family consider bringing good news to missionary kids by becoming their pen pals?

Adrianna Anderson is a Bible teacher, Christian writer, and contributing author for Because of Hope: Reflections of Faith. She has worked in leadership positions for several Southern Baptist churches overseeing women's ministry and missions. She and her husband are an interracial couple with a passion for teaching churches about the subject of race from a biblical perspective while simultaneously promoting the biblical principles of love, forgiveness, unity, and reconciliation.