

“Giving Kids Hands-on Ministry Experiences”

The Connection Mission Conference

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Why Teach Kids Missions

In 1990, Barbara Campbell conducted a survey of 133 missionaries supported by Wheaton Bible Church. Her results were as follows:

112 (84%) accepted Christ as their Savior and Lord under the age of 18

85 (64%) accepted Christ under the age of 13

**64 (48%) made commitments to become full-time, career missionaries under the age of 18**

**21 (16%) made commitments to become full-time, career missionaries under the age of 13**

57 (43%) were influenced in their decision by their parents (either they were career missionaries themselves or they invited missionaries into their homes)

56 (42%) were affected by missions conferences

**77 (58%) cited contact with missionaries, reading books about missionaries, growing up on the mission field**

21 (16%) were directly influenced by their pastors

20 (15%) made decisions at Urbana

17 (13%) were influenced by camp experiences

11 (8%) were influenced by Sunday School teachers

4 (3%) were influenced by Sunday School, in general

*From this survey, it is impressive that exposure to missions teaching, missionaries, and the mission field at an early age plays a significant role in the individual student's decision to personally fulfill the Great Commission in their own lives.*

(From I Don't Want to Wait Until I'm Grown Up by Barbara Campbell, ACMC, c. 1991, pg. 2; ACMC P.O. Box ACMC Wheaton, IL 60189 (708)-260-1660)

Jesus pointed out one problem with missions and evangelism: “**‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the Harvest, therefore, to send out more workers into His harvest field.’**” (Matthew 9:37, 38) This situation has not changed! About 2 billion people still have not heard the Gospel! ***Our children are the missionaries and evangelists of the future!*** Parents, teachers, missionaries, and children's ministers play a major role in nurturing the gifts and calling of children in the areas of missions and evangelism. (Romans 11:29) As we encourage our children in the areas of missions and evangelism, God will honor our faithfulness by calling and equipping our children to be those workers He desires to send forth into His harvest fields all over the world. A great harvest of souls from every tribe, language, people, and nation (Rev. 5:9) will be brought into the Kingdom of God by our children. Let us work together to prepare children to win souls and be wise (Prov. 11:30).

## I. Training Children for Evangelism and Missions

### A. Helpful Skills

#### 1. Puppetry

- a. Use pre-prepared tracks on tape or CD

Resources:

\*One Way Street ([www.onewaystreet.com](http://www.onewaystreet.com))

1-800-569-4537, "Puppet Trax" – several volumes available plus musicals with puppets)

\*Puppet Productions ([www.puppetproductions.com](http://www.puppetproductions.com))

1-800-854-2151; P.O.Box 1066; DeSoto, Texas 75123)

Puppet Trax – Versions 1- 5 plus Puppet Aerobics 2000;

Jim Wideman Ministries, P.O.Box 1214; Broken Arrow, OK 74013

(\* = Spanish and some other foreign language recordings available)

- b. Portable Puppet stages

Purchase or make your own out of PVC pipes;

If long trips are planned, a king-size sheet on a rope works fine! Sew a long pocket at the top for inserting a heavy rope and a pocket at the bottom for weight (like a broomstick or rocks) so curtain will not blow if doing outside ministry.

- c. Puppets – make your own or purchase from a company.

Many companies have ethnic puppets with different skin tones - may be helpful if doing cross-cultural ministry.

- d. Kids that can't do puppetry well can usually help with props.

Props can be made out of simple poster board, laminated, and mounted to foam board cut to size. Use the double stick foam tape (it holds very well). Paint stirring sticks are easy to find, lightweight, and about the right size for puppetry props- easy for kids to hold.

### B. Singing / Choir

1. Use of hand signs or motions helps children "connect" with the song and may help with cross cultural presentations where not everyone understands English.

2. Key words or phrases can be translated if you know a local person who speaks the language you want, and some kids can hold up signs with words in the appropriate language. You can also get some resources and music in different languages from Multi-Language Media ([www.multilanguage.com](http://www.multilanguage.com) 717-738-0582; P.O.Box 301, Ephrata, PA 17522)

3. Use of props is also helpful to make an engaging presentation.

Inflatable props of many kinds can be found in party supply stores or from various companies:

(e.g. inflatable globes, large inflatable crayons in various colors, inflatable musical instruments, inflatable dumbbells, etc.; also international flags – separate or strung together)

Oriental Trading Company ([www.orientaltrading.com](http://www.orientaltrading.com))

1-800-228-2269)

M & N International ([www.mninternational.com](http://www.mninternational.com) 1-800-479-2043)

### C. Clowning / Face Painting / Balloons

1. Colorful costumes help attract attention and draw people's interest (especially children!).
2. Face make-up should be light for kids. Check with the locals and missionaries if doing cross-cultural ministry; some cultures may associate certain faces with occult or demonic powers; probably a decal or painted design on the cheek is OK.
3. Kids can usually learn simple face painting designs; the face painting crayons may melt in the heat if you're outside, but you can use non-toxic, water based paints with a small brush.
4. Skits are fun and can be obtained through One Way Street or in books about clown ministry in Christian book stores.  
[http://www.crossthesky.com/clown\\_ministry.html](http://www.crossthesky.com/clown_ministry.html)  
<http://www.clownsupplies.com>  
 (google "clown ministry" on the web – many sites are listed)
5. Balloon sculpture balloons are very portable, and are a great ministry tool. You have to bring several lightweight plastic pumps along. With an adult to help blow up and tie the balloons, most kids can learn to make simple balloon animals, flowers, sword, hat, etc. Kids in other cultures are usually fascinated and delighted with the balloon sculptures. You can get some through Oriental Trading Company ("animal modeling balloons"); they also have pumps and instruction books. Also, One Way Street and Puppet Productions have balloons and other creative ministry tools.

### D. Other Ministry Supplies

1. Kids can make "goodie bags" for ministry (count out so many pieces of candy, tracts, small toys, etc.). Nice, inexpensive tracts are available in bulk quantities through Good News / Crossway Publishers in Wheaton, IL. They have one tract called "God So Loved" with John 3:16 in 12 languages (a 25-pack is only \$2.25) and a salvation message in English. ([www.gnpcb.org](http://www.gnpcb.org) 1-877-872-2871; 1300 Crescent St.; Wheaton, IL 60187) Multi-Language Media (see address above) has tracts and Bibles / Bible portions in various languages. Check with the missionary which language or script is appropriate. Also, World Missionary Press, Inc. has 48-page scripture booklets in 318 languages as well as coloring books, Bible studies and New Testaments all FREE for distribution worldwide. Contact them to order: [www.wmpress.org](http://www.wmpress.org) (1-574-831-2111; P.O.Box 120; New Paris, IN 46553-0120)
2. Witness bracelets  
 Kids like to make and receive these colorful reminders of God's plan of salvation. They are very portable, too. Gives a chance to present the Gospel in a group or one-on-one using colors. Appropriate for most cultures. Again, check with the local missionary. One Way Street has a puppet track with a song about this called "The Colors of His Love". The witness bracelets are a nice reinforcement of the Gospel colors teaching.

*[Link to directions on "How to Make a Witness Bracelet"]*

## II. Reaching Out To The World

### A. Ministry at an International Church

1. Make contact with pastors of International Churches and plan a program for them.
  - a. Often they welcome children's ministry programs, and they are glad to plan an outreach and invite other internationals or visitors to attend.
  - b. Plan to have a program that appeals to people from different ethnic backgrounds.
  - c. If you know the main language spoken, ask for an interpreter from the church to help you with introducing your program or making props with words for key points.
  - d. Include a ministry time for your kids to give away "goodie bags" with candy and tracts in the appropriate language to all the international kids. If you are able to get Bibles or New Testaments in the appropriate language to give away, these are often very much appreciated, especially if they have a parallel English translation (many internationals may not have a Bible, and they also want to learn English).
  - e. Have your kids make balloon animals in advance, and give them away to international kids.
2. Suggest a fellowship time after the program, and have kids and parents bring some cookies or desserts to share. Let your kids mingle with internationals.
3. Suggest a time to hold a workshop for children's workers at the international church to help train them and their children in ministry (puppets, choir, clowning, balloons, etc.).
4. Offer to help an International Church with a VBS. Have your kids help run the program.

### B. Summer Missions Camp

1. Build your summer camp around an Acts 1:8 theme (being witnesses for Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth). Select a different local ministry that represents each of these Biblical places and have your kids learn about and do ministry at these local places. Example: "Camp On A Mission" (Grace Church, Tulsa, OK; summer, 2004)
  - a. Jerusalem – "Bridges for Peace" an international ministry assisting Jewish people to settle in Israel; or visit a local Messianic Synagogue or fellowship (Jews that believe Jesus is the Messiah); learn about "Jews for Jesus"; have a Passover (Seder) dinner;
  - b. Judea – visit an inner city ministry in your area (homeless shelter, nursing home, orphanage, or other outreach to the poor); have your kids help to serve a meal to the homeless or bring items to donate (clothing, toys, household items to help the needy).
  - c. Samaria – visit an area of your city that is underserved with the gospel, and plan an outreach; an ethnic community, a housing project, a daycare center for needy children, Salvation Army center, or hospital; make sure you have permission from the appropriate directors or officials to include Christian content or hand out Christian material (Pray for God's favor on your outreach!).
  - d. Ends of the earth – visit an international church (as above) and perform a ministry program for their children and families (as above); celebrate with a meal at an ethnic restaurant (include parents).

### C. Take Your Kids on a Mission Trip

1. Start planning a year in advance!
2. Plant a vision for missions! Use the Caleb Project “Kids Around the World” videos ([www.calebproject.org](http://www.calebproject.org) 303-730-4170; 10 West Dry Creek Circle; Littleton, CO 80120) and supplemental teaching material or other kids’ missions curriculum;
3. Support missionaries and contact them for possibilities of children’s ministry with them.
4. Have interested and committed kids / families submit an application and an application fee.
5. Decide on the cost per person. Make travel arrangements for your group. Extra money can always be donated to the missionary.
6. Begin fundraising; have kids send support letters to their friends, family, teachers, other acquaintances describing the ministry / outreach. Hold car washes, bake sales, garage sales, special church dinners, carnivals, etc. to raise money from the community.
7. Have regular team meetings for prayer and training in ministry (puppetry, songs, skits, dance, etc.).
8. Encourage each child to have a prayer partner and pray together every day about the trip.
9. Assign kids daily Bible reading to build their faith for ministry. \*\*
10. Have kids get their official birth certificates, passports (if needed), and immunizations.
11. Learn about the culture where you are going. (climate, food, language, customs, music)
12. Visit an International Church from that culture to practice your program.
13. As the trip approaches, have time during team meetings to pack ministry supplies (any food items, clothing, crayons, coloring books, tracts, Bibles you will be giving away during the mission trip). Try to have some families purchase or obtain donated gifts for the pastors and their wives and missionary families that you will be staying and working with on your trip.
14. Have a final packing meeting to pack all your ministry materials.
15. Distribute a list of all important emergency information / contacts to families along with your itinerary and prayer requests.
16. Enjoy the journey! Be flexible. Be prepared to change your plans. Serve the missionary as much as possible. Minister to the local people.
17. After returning home, have a party to share testimonies, memories, photos, and include a “debriefing”. Kids may need help processing the experience, understanding the poverty or spiritual oppression they encountered, adapting to the cultural changes (trouble with “re-entry”).

\*\* Tasch Ministries International has many years of experience taking kids on mission trips. They have summer camps, mission trips, intern programs for kids, and resources for mission teaching and outreach – “Little Preachers End Time Missions Manual” ([www.taschministries.com](http://www.taschministries.com) 336-838-1042; P.O.Box 487; N. Wilkesboro, NC 28659). Kidzana Ministries also does mission trips with kids and adults to help train children’s ministry workers worldwide. ([www.kidzana.org](http://www.kidzana.org) 800-222-6241; 8229 44<sup>th</sup> Avenue West, Suite G; Mukilteo, WA 98275)

### D. Have a “Gospel Balloon Launch”

1. Inflate world balloons with helium and tie a ribbon with a tract to each balloon. The tract has to be lightweight for the balloon to rise – Good News Publishers (see address above) has many to choose from.
2. Give each child a balloon, go outside, and (on your cue) have kids release their balloons as a group. Pray that each balloon will be directed by the wind of the Holy Spirit to someone who needs to hear the Gospel and receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
3. Use the balloons as a symbol of how the Gospel has spread around the world.

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4. LINK International (homeschool kids’ newsletter for Voice of the Martyrs) has a story how believers in South Korea have used balloons printed with Korean scriptures to reach the North Korean people with the Gospel. These bright orange, plastic balloons float over the border at night, and North Koreans can pick up the balloons, put them in their pockets, and take them home to read the Good News of Jesus! ([www.persecution.com](http://www.persecution.com) The Voice of the Martyrs; P.O.Box 443; Bartlesville, OK 74005; 918-337-8015; They have another site just for kids’ resources: [www.kidsofcourage.com](http://www.kidsofcourage.com) where you can find the video or DVD called “Linking Up: North Korea” and an activity book.)

#### E. Do a “Hands-on” Mission Project without leaving Home!

1. “Operation Christmas Child” – an annual project directed by “Samaritan’s Purse” involves having kids or adults pack a simple shoe box with toys, gifts, school supplies, hard candy, and other items a needy child would enjoy; the shoe box can be wrapped and should be labeled for a girl or boy and the appropriate age. Brochures and information are available through “Samaritan’s Purse”: ([www.samaritanaspurse.org](http://www.samaritanaspurse.org) 1-800-353-5949; P.O.Box 3000; 801 Bamboo Rd.; Boone, NC 28607) Shoe box gifts are usually collected the week before Thanksgiving, and many collection centers serve as “drop-off points” for receiving the shoe box gifts nationwide. Contact Samaritan’s Purse to find the collection center nearest you. In 2004, Samaritan’s Purse collected and distributed over 7.4 million shoe box gifts in 95 countries around the world. Many individuals and families receive Jesus as Lord and Savior after experiencing this touch of God’s love. Let your kids and your whole church participate in this unique project!
2. Slavic Gospel Association often has children’s missions projects that kids can do as part of a Sunday School or VBS. These projects benefit children in Russia and CIS countries. “Immanuel’s Child” is a Christmas outreach that allows kids or adults to prepare special gifts and Bibles for children in these countries. ([www.sga.org](http://www.sga.org) 1-800-242-5350; 6151 Commonwealth Dr.; Loves Park, IL 61111)
3. Gospel for Asia has a “Pedal Project” which allows kids or adults to raise money for bicycles for native missionaries in Asia who travel from village to village by bicycle. ([www.gfa.org](http://www.gfa.org) 1-800-WIN-ASIA; 1800 Golden Trail Court; Carrollton, TX 75010) They also have some homeschool lessons for kids called “Window to the World” (WOW) to help give kids a world view of Asia.

**WATCH YOUR KIDS BECOME WORLD CHANGERS!!!**

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<http://www.worldchangerkids.org/>