

OFFERINGS FOR THE MISSION

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

HELP MISSION ENTRUST MISSIONARIES

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Philippians 2:25-30; 4:14-20

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To encourage the children to want to help missionaries accomplish the work that God has entrusted to them.

MEMORY VERSE

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

It is likely that your children are not familiar with missionary work. Some may think that the "great commission" is something that the apostles did in the past and that the missionaries do today. Others may have never heard that term. With certainty, your children have not prepared their backpacks to go to talk about Christ to the most remote places in the world. However, this lesson will teach them that the task of the great commission is for every Christian, not only for missionaries or evangelists. Your children can learn to participate in the mission of the church "now." They do not have to wait until they are adults! God can use them even at an early age.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Philippians 2:25-30 and 4:14-20. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians while he was in prison. The Church of Philippi was the one that had responded to God's message by sending help to the apostle Paul.

The Philippians chose Epaphroditus to take gifts to Paul and accompany him for a time. Epaphroditus knew that when making

that trip, his life could be in danger, and so it was. When he was with the apostle, he became seriously ill and was about to die. When the Philippian church heard about it, the congregation became very concerned. For that reason, Paul decided that Epaphroditus would return to Philippi. With him, he sent a letter, asking the church to welcome him with joy because he had fulfilled his task with excellence and deserved a great welcome.

In his letter, Paul thanked the brothers and sisters of Philippi for the offering they had sent him, explaining clearly that he did not express gratitude so that they would continue sending offerings, but to teach them that it is more blessed to give than to receive.

The most important thing for Paul was that the members at Philippi, knowing his need, made it theirs and responded immediately and with love. Their disposition was such that they accepted Paul's affliction as their own and decided to act. Their spiritual growth was the fruit that Paul wanted to see; for this, he did an difficult job. The offerings of the Philippians pleased God because they had obedient hearts and were attentive to others' needs.

God continues to work in the same way today. The offerings and prayers that Christians send are a blessing and help for missionaries around the world.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

A special offering

For this activity, you will need small boxes, colored paper and glue.

Give a box to each child, and ask each one to decorate it with colored paper. When they are finished, let the glue dry. Tell them to take their boxes home and put their offerings they will send to the missionaries in their boxes. That little box will be a reminder that they should give an offering for missionary work.

TEACH THE LESSON

To tell this story we suggest that you write it on paper and keep it in an envelope, as if it were a letter. Open the letter in front of the children and tell them that you are going to read them the message that Paul sent to the church in a place called Philippi.

The Christians of that church were very worried. Some time ago, upon learning that Paul was in prison, they had sent a man named Epaphroditus with some gifts for Paul.

"Epaphroditus, please take these gifts to Paul and stay with him to help him in whatever he needs," the members of the church had told him.

He gladly carried out what was asked of him. But after a while, they received bad news: "Epaphroditus is very sick, about to die!"

Paul knew that the members of the Philippian church were worried about their friend. So, when Epaphroditus had the strength to travel, Paul told him, "I think you should go back to Philippi. Our friends want to see you and know that you're better."

Epaphroditus agreed, but before traveling, Paul wrote a letter for his friend to take to the believers of the Philippian church.

"Dear brothers and sisters of Philippi:

"I think it is time for my friend Epaphroditus to come back to be with you. He is like a brother to me.

"You sent him to be with me when I needed him the most. You sent him as a messenger to take care of me; now he is eager to return. He does not want you to worry about his health.

"He was very sick, but God had mercy on him and me. I want you to see him so you know he is okay. Receive him in the Lord with much joy. He almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to do what you could not do for me.

"Thank you for participating in my sufferings. You were the only ones who sent me help. Thanks for everything you did for me. I no longer expect to receive more gifts. I am happy because you learned to give and help others with joy. I received everything you sent me and I have an abundance. Your offerings please the Lord.

"My God, then, will supply everything you lack according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. To God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

A servant of Christ,

Paul

CONNECT THE LESSON

Epaphroditus and Paul

Hand out Student Activity Sheet #183-A. Have the children number the pictures in Student Activity Sheet #183-A according to the Bible story. As they work, talk with them about the importance of helping in the missionary work by giving our offerings.

Obedient hearts

Help the group out the five hearts from the bottom of Student Activity Sheet #183-B and help the children paste them in the appropriate spaces. Next, ask several volunteers to read the entire sentence. Encourage them to take the activity sheet home to tell their family members what they learned in the session.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Close the unit by making a collective review of the biblical text. Give opportunity for those who have learned it by heart to come forward and say it aloud. If possible, reward them with a treat, a pencil or a bookmark for their Bible.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Briefly review the unit sessions, and stress the importance of fulfilling the Great Commission that Jesus left us. Form a circle and pray for missionaries from around the world. Be sensitive to respond to anyone who God may be speaking to about being a witness or a missionary.

Encourage

Give the children the work they did during the unit, and encourage them share it with their families and friends.

Invite

Challenge the children to attend the next session to start a new unit. Encourage them to bring their friends too.