

A Ministry to International Children

The outreach to the international community is:

- *A ministry of Gospel-centered friendship*
- *A ministry to fulfill a need: English practice, isolation loneliness, cultural awareness, etc*

One of the greatest avenues for creating relationships with the internationals in our communities is through a ministry to the children. Offering classes for English practice and Bible study has proven to be an excellent avenue for becoming active within the international community and is giving Christians the privilege of sharing the message of God's love.

Many spouses/grandparents live in university housing and spend their days caring for children. The children's classes offer an opportunity for a "place to go" for both the caregiver and the child. A "Moms (dads, grandparents, babysitter) and Tots" class actively involves both the parent and child in the same class. Another model for older children and parents is to offer separate classes for the children and parents at the same time. The parents' study coincides with the children's Bible lesson.

Beginning

Beginning a children's class is an avenue into the international community, helping develop Gospel-centered friendships and fulfilling a need.

Step 1: Identify a family with a child(ren) and develop a personal relationship with them.

Step 2: Ask permission to begin a class in English. Explain that the teacher will do typical American songs, finger plays, games, etc. and share a Bible story and art project at each 45–60 minute meeting.

Step 3: Set a time and place for the first class. Encourage the friend to invite others with young children to attend. It is okay to begin with one child and one parent! If the class is done well, others will certainly be invited to share in this wonderful American experience.

Step 4: Prepare for the first class !

Class Groupings

Moms & Tots — 18 months to 2 years

Preschool — 2- and 3-year-olds

Pre-kindergarten — 4- and 5-year-olds

Kindergarten through 2nd grade

1st–3rd grade

2nd–5th grade

It is important to be flexible. The class needs to fit the children, not the children fit the class.

Teacher Qualifications:

- Needs to have the gift of teaching young children

- Lives a life that reflects the love of Jesus to others
- Friendly, energetic, creative, flexible
- Sees this opportunity as a personal ministry

Basic Materials & Equipment:

- Container for carrying supplies. (A Rubbermaid storage container is sturdy.)
- Vinyl table cloth to make a "classroom."
- Flannelgraph made from a large embroidery hoop with flannel stretched across the frame.
- Cardboard squares (12"x2") for writing and coloring boards.

General Supplies:

- Crayons (box of 8)
- Scissors for children
- Pencils
- Glue, stapler, Scotch tape
- Markers
- Construction paper
- Art items (feathers, yarn, toilet paper tubes, styrofoam trays, glitter, etc)
- Stickers (religious or theme-related)
- Rubber stamps

(Half gallon milk jugs with an opening cut out on the side works well as a storage organizer.)

Exploring Materials: (Appropriate to the age and developmental level of the children)

- Puzzles
- Playdough with rollers and cookie cutters
- Books
- Manipulatives (items for counting, sorting, etc): pegboard, figures, clothespins, pompoms, tiles
- Games: bingo, alphabet, number, Jesus, lotto, Candyland, Go Fish, etc

MAKE SURE THAT ALL ITEMS ARE LARGE ENOUGH NOT TO BE SWALLOWED BY THE YOUNGER CHILDREN!!

Bibles: (For preschool classes and up)

The Beginners Bible, Questar Publishers, Inc., Sisters, Oregon

The New Adventure Bible, (NIV study Bible for kids) Zondervan

Resources for "Gleaning" Ideas:

Together with Jesus — Sunday School curriculum for parents and two-year-olds. CPH

Gospel Light—Living Word Curriculum — Easy English and visual presentation for all levels. Gospel Light, Ventura, CA

Get Ready, Set, Grow! — A preplanned calendar of preschool activities. Fearson Teacher Aids, Carthage, IL

Visit your Christian bookstore and teacher supply store to find teacher helps for teaching, arts, storytelling, etc.

Local garage/rummage sales can provide you with all kinds of resources. Remember to be selective since you will also need a storage place.

Typical Class Schedule

The amount of time spent in each area depends upon the level of the children. Younger children need more activity/movement time. The older children spend more time in Bible study and arts/crafts projects.

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| 10–15 minutes | Activities (free choice) and interaction time (coordinated with Bible story theme) |
| 5–10 minutes | Welcome (Action/Movement Songs and finger plays) |
| 5–15 minutes | Bible story time |
| 5–10 minutes | Art/craft activity (coordinated with Bible story theme) |
| 5 minutes | Goodbye (Song, prayer, etc.) |

The host parent makes the decision to offer a simple snack or not. Eating does provide for excellent fellowship, but the food can be messy. The parents of the younger children also arrange for the meeting place. The older children offer their apartments with parental permission.