



DiscipleLand

Missions Education

Level 1, Quarter D—Village Life With God

Integrate these World-missions concepts into your **DiscipleLand** lesson. Introduce your children to one missions truth each lesson.

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1D—Missions Education

God's Great Passion

Teacher Intro—Christianity is not a Western phenomenon, but people can easily forget that other cultures worship God in spirit and truth, using their own unique styles and perspectives. In this quarter, we introduce children to the cultures of other countries. God loves all people, and the kids will see how the Apostle Paul's technique of meeting people "where they are at" is still used by missionaries all around the world.

Suggested helpful resources:

- *The Global Bible* (International Bible Society)
- *Window on the World* (Caleb Resources)
- *A Country Far Away* by Nigel Gray (Orchard Books)
- Back issues of *National Geographic* magazines—clippings of pictures
- People in your faith community with cross-cultural experience.

Lesson 1—What Is Culture?

Supplies: paper plates, poster board

Before class, print on each paper plate a large letter from the words THUMB and CULTURE.

Who remembers what the letters in T-H-U-M-B stand for?

Ask for five volunteers to each take a plate and spell THUMB while facing the class. Encourage kids to call out Tribal, Hindu, Unreligious, Muslim, and Buddhist as the child holding the letter raises the plate above his or her head.

NOTE: If you have not studied the THUMB people (*World-Watch Missions Education* for 1C, *At Worship with God*), simply do the spelling game for the word, CULTURE.

We learned a little about each of these religions. By doing this, we also learned something about culture. Point to the word on display. Invite volunteers to come forward and hold the plates with the seven letters that spell the word CULTURE.

The important thing for us to understand is what the word "culture" means. Here's one way to understand culture—culture is *the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.* To begin with, let's take the T-H-U-M-B people as an example. If you met a TRIBAL person, what would you expect him or her to believe about God? Wait for answer and respond. If you met a HINDU person, what would expect that person to believe about God? Encourage

responses. Do the same with UNRELIGIOUS, MUSLIM, BUDDHIST.

If you understand something about the way people worship God, you understand a little about their culture. Remind kids that culture is *the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Lesson 2—Celebrations

Supplies: paper plates from lesson one, 5" x 7" pieces of blank paper

Review the spelling for the words THUMB and CULTURE. **Last time we said that culture refers to things that people think, feel, and do that help us to understand them. There are five things we can look at like "windows" into another culture. These five things are celebrations, recreation, schooling, treasures, and worship. As we talk about these things, we'll be showing what our own family culture is like.**

Give each child a piece of blank paper. **I want you to think of some special time that you celebrate with your family. It could be your birthday, a holiday, or some special event. Draw a picture that shows how your family celebrates. Be sure to sign your picture with your name.**

While kids draw, show a picture to give an example of how people in another culture celebrate a special event. State the definition again. Culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.* **People from another country's celebrations help us see what is important to them. When we know what they like and value, we can better explain to them what is important to God.**

As you collect the pictures, explain that you'll keep them for the next meeting. If possible, display the pictures around the room with the definition printed on card stock and posted in a prominent place.

Next time we meet we'll talk about another "window" into our American culture that helps people understand us.

Lesson 3—Recreation

Start with examples of how another culture celebrates a special event or holiday. Let kids share their pictures from the previous session. **Let's draw another picture. This time draw something your family likes to do for fun—for recreation.**

While children draw, describe (show picture or media clip) the way children in another culture play games or observe sporting events. **When we see how people in another country like to have fun and spend their free time, we get another peek through the window of what's important to them. By knowing what gives other people happiness and joy, we can better explain the joy that comes from knowing Jesus.** Remind kids of the definition of culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Collect pictures and add them to displays from previous week.

Next time we meet we'll talk about another "window" into our American culture that helps people understand us.

Lesson 4—Education

Start with examples of how another culture plays games or gets involved in sports. Let children share their pictures from the previous session. **What do you think we are going to draw about this week?** Encourage responses. **This time I want you to draw about ways that you learn things. How do you learn?**

While kids draw, describe or show the way children in another culture go to school, or participate in learning at home. **The way people in another country teach their children and each other helps us understand what is important to them. By understanding how people learn, we can be better teachers about God.** Remind children of the definition of culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Collect pictures and add them to displays from previous week.

Next time we meet, we'll talk about another "window" into our American culture that helps people understand us.

Lesson 5—Treasures

Start with examples of how another culture provides education for their children. Let students share their pictures from the previous session. **Today let's draw about treasure—but not like pirate treasure full of gold and fancy jewels! Can you think of something your family treasures? It could be an old photograph, or a piece of furniture, or a special memory. Draw what your family treasures above all other things.**

While children draw, describe or show something that children and families from another culture value highly. **People in other countries all value different things. When we see what is "treasure" to those people, we can explain how Jesus is the greatest treasure of all!** Remind kids of the definition of culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Collect pictures and add them to displays from previous week.

Next time we meet, we'll talk about another "window" into our American culture that helps people understand us.

Lesson 6—Worship

Start with examples of how another culture treasures an item or person. Let children share their pictures from the previous session. **There's one final window we look through to see a people's culture. Can you guess what it is?** Encourage responses. **Today I want you to draw a picture showing how your family worships God!**

While kids draw, describe or show something that shows children in another culture worshipping God or false deities. **This window might be the most important of all for understanding people from another country. Even if people worship something other than the one true God, we know that they want to find God. We can use what we know about how they worship to show them the truth about Jesus!** Remind children of the definition of culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Collect pictures and add them to displays from previous week.

Next time we meet, we'll talk more about culture and how we can understand other people.

Lesson 7—Different Cultures

Let children talk about the pictures they drew in previous sessions. Remind kids about the five different culture “windows”—celebrations, recreation, education, treasures, and worship. Give them time to share what these “windows” explain about them and their family and how they worship God.

If possible, introduce a person or show a brief video, that can give examples of children in a culture very different from your children’s culture. Talk about the differences they noticed. Discuss the similarities.

Next time, we’ll talk about the most important part of understanding another culture. Can you guess what it is? Let’s say the definition together once more. Culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Lesson 8—Language

Who can quote our definition of culture? Encourage responses. Lead the group to quote the definition in unison: culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

One thing that allows people to share a culture is language. How important is it for people to be able to talk to one another, to understand one another? Allow kids to respond.

We know that people all over the world celebrate, play games, go to school, value things, and worship God in many different ways. In most of these examples, their language is different from other peoples’ languages. Do you know where this began?

Some may already know the story of the tower of Babel. Direct kids to the Genesis 11:1-9 and read it together. You might read the account from The Message or from a Bible story book.

How many reasons can you find in this story for God to mix up the languages? Encourage responses. **Next time we meet we’ll talk more about why God mixed up the languages.**

Lesson 9—Language part 2

Let’s say the definition of culture together. Culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.*

Last time we met we learned that having many different cultures was God’s idea. In the beginning, He confused peoples’ language from one to many. He had more than one reason for doing this, but the main reason was to keep the people from disobeying His first command. Read Genesis 1:28, and 11:1-9. **God wanted people to fill the earth with praise to His greatness and glory. That was His plan from the beginning.**

Now, each culture has its own special way of praising God. That’s why it’s important for people—all over the world, speaking every language, and enjoying every culture—to know about God’s love for them.

Can you name a culture other than your own? Let’s pray for those people to know about Jesus. End with prayer for the cultures mentioned.

Lesson 10—Culture Target

Supplies: large paper plate, markers

Before class, prepare an illustration on a large paper plate. Trace three circles, one within the next, to look like a “bull’s eye” for archery or darts. Inside the larger, outside circle print ACTIONS. Inside the next circle BELIEFS. Inside the center, WHAT IS TRUE.

Using the illustration, ask: **Can we answer the three questions our circle asks about people from another country: What do people do? What does this show us about what people believe or value? What is truth for them?**

Let’s try this out with an action—brushing our teeth. What does this action show about what we believe or value? Encourage responses. Look for an answer similar to “I believe that brushing my teeth keeps them clean and healthy. I value good dental health.” **Now comes the hard part. What does this belief or value say about what we think is true?** Allow kids to answer. If necessary, supply an answer like, **Truth for us is that germs exist that can harm our teeth. We honor God by brushing the germs away and keeping this part of our body healthy.**

If appropriate, let children come up with their own examples of actions that reveal beliefs and values, even a view of truth. Encourage them to talk about these ideas at home.

Lesson 11—Cultural Change

Refer to the target illustration from the previous lesson. **The easiest thing to understand about a culture is what people do, their actions.** Point to the kids' drawings. **What people do to celebrate events, play games, provide education for their kids, take care of treasures, or worship God. We have many pictures of these things around us in the room and we have talked about our own activities and those of cultures different from our own.**

God understands every culture on earth to its innermost center. Point to the target. **He knows what people do, what they believe and value, and what they think is truth. He knows that for a culture to honor *Him*, it must be changed from within. We can force people to change their behavior sometimes, but they don't really change until what they believe and value changes. This is one of the most important tasks of a missionary—a person who wants to take the Good News about Jesus to a group of people who do not know about Him.**

The missionary needs to stay with the people long enough to understand them at the very center of their beliefs and values. He needs to learn what, in their culture, is already there to help them understand the truth that God wants them to have. When people understand this and believe that God provided forgiveness through Jesus' death on the cross, then what they do—their actions—will change as they become more and more like Jesus.

Take time to pray for the cultures you have looked at together.

Lesson 12—Reaching Cultures

Refer to the target illustration from the previous lesson. Point to the outer circle. **God is pleased with us when we pray (something we *do*) for people who don't know about His love.** Point to the middle circle. **This shows we *believe* He loves the whole world, that He values every person, and so do we.** Point to the center circle. **By this we know the *truth* of His plan to fill all the earth with His praise and glory.**

Let's say the definition of culture together once more. Culture—*the things that people think, feel, and do that help us understand them.* **We can praise God that within every culture on earth—no matter how different it is from ours, no matter how strange it may seem—is something that will allow a messenger of the Gospel to find a way for people can understand and believe how much God loves them.**

If appropriate, close by encouraging each child to complete the following statement, "Dear Heavenly Father, I praise You that people all over the world can understand Your love. They can change from within in order to praise You. I pray for (let them fill in the name of a group) to be changed from within."