



**DiscipleLand**

***Missionary Biography Questions***

**Level 2, Quarter D—Mary Slessor**

Integrate these questions and activities into your **DiscipleLand** Missionary Biography time. Expand your children's understanding of each story segment.

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## 2D—Missionary Biography

Mary Slessor

### Teacher Intro—MARY SLESSOR (1848—1915)

“It were worthwhile to die, if thereby a soul could be born again.” This note found in the margin of Mary Slessor’s personal Bible speaks to the profound dedication she showed to the Calabar and Okoyong people in Africa. In a place where no one valued the life of human beings, this Scottish missionary worked tirelessly to show the people that God valued them in ways they could never imagine. Her efforts on behalf of Christ ended many horrible customs, including torture by poison and the killing of twin babies. She endured malaria, hostile conflicts, and even a hippopotamus attack to bring people the Good News of Jesus Christ. Some consider her the most influential female missionary of all time—this small-statured woman who once declared she was on a “royal mission” for the King of Kings.

### Lesson 1—Dreams of Africa

Read the story from page 12 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Children can begin to prepare for God’s work.

#### Discussion Questions:

**Mary grew up in Scotland.** Help the children find Scotland on the map or globe. Discuss anything the children know about the Scottish missionary David Livingstone. Also point out where Africa is located.

**As a girl, Mary loved hearing missionary stories. Have you heard missionary stories? Tell us about them.**

**Where did Mary work?** (She worked in a factory.) **Why did she work?** (Her father died and she needed to help the family earn money.) **Since she had to work during the day, how could Mary learn to read and write?** (She went to school after work.)

**What did Mary want to do when she turned fourteen?** (She wanted to teach the children on Sunday.)

**When Mary was still a girl, she began teaching others about God. How could her teaching help prepare her for missionary work? Are you learning something now that will help prepare you for what you might do as an adult?**

**Do kids have to wait to become adults to tell others about Jesus? Have you told anyone about Jesus? Tell us about the experience.**

#### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God can use your interests and talents.

Have the children draw a picture of them doing something

they like to do or using a special talent they have. Ask each child to show his or her picture and explain how God could one day use that interest or talent to help people learn about Jesus. Pray with the children and ask God to help the children develop and use the interests and talents they have to help others learn about Him.

### Lesson 2—I’ll Go!

The story so far... **Mary’s mother told her stories of missionaries to Africa and she knew someday she wanted to be a missionary. As a girl, she worked in a factory to help earn money for her family.**

Read the story from page 18 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* God helps people be brave to do His work.

#### Discussion Questions:

**Why did Mary want to teach the children?** (She wanted them to learn about God and how to read and write.) **How did the boys treat their new teacher?** (They yelled for her to go away and tried to scare her.)

**Was Mary afraid? Why or why not?** (She was not afraid because she knew God was with her.) **Mary reacted in a brave way and the boys respected her bravery and attended her classes and meetings. Have you ever felt really brave because you knew God was with you?**

**What happened when the missionary David Livingstone died?** (Mary wanted to become missionaries and carry on the work he began.)

**Why did Mary need bravery to apply to become a missionary?** (She was a single woman and at that time it wasn’t easy for a single woman to become a missionary and go to a dangerous place like Africa.)

**Have you ever asked God to lead you and show you what to do? Will you be brave and do what God shows you to do?**

#### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God can help us be brave to do His work.

Set out paper and pencils. Write the word BRAVE on the board in big, block outline letters (so the inside of the letters has space for writing). Have the children copy the word on their papers so that it fills the paper. Inside each letter have the children see how many times they can write the word GOD. Remind the children that God is our source of strength and fills us with bravery to do what He wants us to do. Gather the children together to pray. Let each child ask God to help him or her be brave to do what pleases Him this week.

### Lesson 3—Welcome to Africa

The story so far...**Mary taught many tough boys about Jesus and how to read and write. When a famous missionary to Africa died, Mary wanted to go to Africa as a missionary. She applied to a mission agency and asked God to send her where He wanted to use her.**

Read the story from page 24 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* When someone asks, God will lead.

#### Discussion Questions:

**Mary asked God to lead her where she should go to be a missionary. Do you ask God to help lead you? Why or why not?**

**The mission board decided to send her to the Calabar. Do you think that decision made Mary happy or sad? Why?** (She was happy because that was the exact place she had learned about from her mother and Mary had wanted to go there.) Read Psalm 37:4. **God knew the desires of Mary's heart and He sent her to Africa. Have you experienced God giving you the desires of your heart?**

**Do you think learning a language would be easy or hard? Are you learning any other language? If so, why? Do you think knowing another language is a good thing for missionaries?**

**At that time, most missionaries dressed the way they did in their home country. The people of Scotland wore long heavy dresses because it was cold. Mary lived in hot Africa. She chose to dress more like the Africans than the English. Why might some other missionaries not like Mary dressing like the natives? Would you dress like the people you witnessed to?**

#### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder to ask God to lead.

Have each child trace one foot on a piece of paper and cut it out. On the board write "God lead me." Let the children copy the words on the foot and then decorate it. Discuss ways they can know God is leading them. Gather the children together for prayer and have each child take a turn holding up the foot and asking God to lead him or her.

### Lesson 4—Jungle Sickness

The story so far...**Mary was accepted as a missionary and she prayed for God to lead her. God did and she was thrilled that God had allowed her to be sent to the Calabar region of Africa—exactly where she had dreamed of going as a little girl.**

Read the story from page 30 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* God is always with us.

#### Discussion Questions:

**What happened to Mary that caused her to stop teaching?** (She had malaria—jungle sickness.) **What caused malaria or jungle sickness?** (A mosquito bite caused the illness.)

**Where did Mary go to get well?** (She went back to Britain.) **The area of Great Britain included England and her birthplace of Scotland.** Help the children find Africa and then locate England and Scotland.

**When Mary felt better, what was she asked to do?** (She was asked to speak in churches about her missionary life.) **Was this something she enjoyed doing?** (No, she was scared to speak to an audience.) **Would you like speaking in front of an audience?**

**God was with Mary while she was in Africa, when she was sick and when she had to speak to audiences. How do you think Mary knew God was with her?**

**Mary felt braver in the jungles of Africa, than in front of an audience. In Africa, Mary had once quoted from Psalm 50 to encourage herself and to scare away a leopard.** Read Psalm 50. **Why do you think Mary felt brave when she quoted Scriptures? Have you ever quoted a Bible verse to help you feel brave or safe?**

#### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God is always with you.

Give each child a sheet of paper and give instructions to fold the paper into fourths. Have the children draw a picture in each of the four sections that shows God is with them in different situations. Allow time for each child to show and explain his or her picture to the group. Pray with the children and ask God to help the children recognize ways that God is with them during the week.

## Lesson 5—Orphans

The story so far...**Mary became very ill and had to return to England and Scotland. Once she felt stronger, she was asked to speak in churches. Mary discovered she was more scared of speaking to an audience than of walking through the dangerous jungles of Africa. After a year she was able to return to Africa.**

Read the story from page 36 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* God loves everyone.

### Discussion Questions:

**What happy surprise did Mary find when she returned to Africa?** (She was going to go to a remote area that didn't have a missionary.) **What happened to the missionaries from that area?** (The missionary life was hard and they finally left.) **Do you think Mary will find the life too hard and leave? Why or why not?**

**Do you know any twins? Why were the African people afraid of twins?** (They believed twins were evil.) **Why was Mary upset with how they treated twins?** (She knew God loved the twins and the twins weren't evil)

**What did Mary do about the situation with twins?** (She rescued the twins from death.)

**Mary went to Africa to tell the people that God loves them. Do you think everyone today knows that God loves him or her? What can you do to help people know that God loves them?**

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God loves everyone.

Give each child a sheet of paper and crayons or markers. Let the children draw as many people on the paper as they can. At the end of the time, see how many people each child drew. Remind the children that God loves everyone. Spend time thanking God for loving each child in the class. Then let each child name people he or she can thank God for loving.

## Lesson 6—Courageous White Woman

The story so far...**Mary returned to Africa and went to a remote village. She discovered the people thought twins were evil and left the babies to die. Mary began to rescue twin babies and even adopted some of them herself.**

Read the story from page 42 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Rely on the Lord's strength to do what is right.

### Discussion Questions:

**Why did Mary want to help the woman?** (The woman was being dragged off by men from another village.) **What did Mary do?** (She yelled at them to stop and then stood still while they tried to scare her with a whip.) **Do you think it was easy for Mary to stand up to the men? How might you have handled that situation?**

**Mary asked the Lord to give her strength to be brave and help the woman. Who are some people in the Bible who asked God for strength?** Read Psalm 18:1. **When have you asked God for strength?**

**What nickname did the people give Mary?** (She was nicknamed Ma Slessor or White Ma.) Read Psalm 113:9. **Mary never had children of her own, but her house was filled with children. How did Mary act like a Ma or mother to the African people?** (She loved them, cared for them when they were sick, taught them to read and write, and told them to change their evil customs.)

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder to rely on God's strength.

Let the children tell the class about times when they have felt brave because they asked God for help to do what is right. Give each child a piece of paper and crayons or markers. Invite the children to draw pictures of them doing something with strength from the Lord. Gather the class together for a time of prayer. Pray for each child to remember to ask God for strength to do what is right.

## Lesson 7—Return to England

The story so far...**Mary bravely helped a woman who had been captured by men from a neighboring village. The men tried to scare Mary with a whip, but she relied on the strength of the Lord and finally the men ran off. Mary loved and cared for the African people and they called her Ma Slessor.**

Read the story from page 48 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* The message of Jesus makes a difference in people's lives.

### Discussion Questions:

**Who went to Britain with Mary?** (Janie her little adopted girl went with Mary.) **When Mary felt better, she spoke to audiences about Africa. Why was it so important to have Janie along?** (Janie was a twin and would have been killed if Mary hadn't told them killing twins was wrong and went against what Jesus taught.)

**How did the message of Jesus Christ change people in Janie's village?** (The people no longer killed twins.) **How has the message of Jesus Christ changed your life?**

**What news made Mary feel all alone in the world?** (Her mother and sister had died and she didn't have any living family members left.) **Who did Mary call her family now?** (The African people were her family now.)

**Mary didn't have telephones or Internet to stay in touch with her family. How do you think missionaries today feel when they are far away from their families?**

**When Mary's family was alive, she couldn't go to really dangerous areas because her family would worry. Does your family worry about some of the things you do? Mary didn't worry because she trusted God to be with her in the dangerous areas.**

**What is something you worry about? How can you trust God and not worry about it?**

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God's message makes a difference in people's lives.

Discuss with the children how the African people were filled with fear until the message of Jesus Christ was told to them. Give each child a piece of paper. After folding the paper in half like a greeting card, have the children draw a face on front that shows fear or sadness. On the inside, kids should draw a smiling face that shows the difference Jesus has made. After the children finish their pictures, gather the children together for prayer. Thank God for making a difference in your life and then let each child also have the opportunity to thank God. Let children volunteer to pray for people in their lives who need God in their lives.

## Lesson 8—Off to Okoyong

The story so far...**Mary took little Janie to England and Scotland. As Mary told people about Africa, the people could see how the message of Jesus was changing the hearts of the Africans. Mary's mother and sister died and now her only family was her African family.**

Read the story from page 54 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Be happy when God brings new experiences into your life.

### Discussion Questions:

**How did Mary travel to the new village?** (She rode in a very fancy canoe.) **Would you have liked to ride in the canoe with Mary? Why or why not?**

**Mary was excited about new experiences because they were opportunities to see God at work. How did God use Mary in the new experience at Okoyong?** (She taught, gave medicine, and told the people about Jesus.)

**Mary could have been scared at Okoyong where she was the only white person. Instead, Mary chose to be happy. What things did Mary enjoy doing?** (She loved teaching, giving medicine, and telling people about Jesus.) **What things do you enjoy doing?**

**Do you like new experiences? What new experiences have you had recently? Did you choose to be happy?**

**Why would it be important for missionaries to choose to be happy with new experiences?** If your church supports missionaries, take time to let the class pray for the missionaries to be happy in each new experience God brings to them.

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder to be happy in new experiences.

Discuss with the children some of the new experiences they might encounter such as moving, going to a new school, playing a new sport, etc. Give each child a piece of paper and crayons. Let the children draw themselves choosing to be happy in a new experience. Pray for God to bring peace and joy to the children as they encounter new experiences.



## Lesson 9—Power of Prayer

The story so far...**Mary rode in a royal canoe to a village where she would be the only white person. Instead of being scared, Mary was happy that God brought this new experience so that she could tell these villagers about Jesus.**

Read the story from page 60 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Prayer is powerful.

### Discussion Questions:

**Why did the wife think Mary had magic?** (The witch doctors used spells and strange things like magic.) **Did Mary use magic to make the chief better?**

**What would happen if the chief died?** (His wives and slaves would be killed.) **What would happen if Mary went to him and he died?** (She would also be killed.) **Why do you think Mary risked her life to go help the king?** (She wanted to tell him and the people of the village about God's power to heal.) **What happened?** (Mary prayed and God healed the chief.)

**How did Mary show that she believed in the power of prayer?** (She went to help the chief even though she might be killed.) **Do you believe in the power of prayer?**

**Missionaries have a powerful tool to use—prayer! Have you heard missionaries tell stories of answered prayers? What happened?**

**Mary often trusted the power of prayer was she walked through the forests. When she heard the leopards, she prayed for God to do the same thing He did for Daniel—shut the mouths of the beasts. Have you seen a powerful answer to a prayer?**

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that prayer is powerful.

Write the word PRAYER on the board. Give each child a piece of paper and crayons. Let the children copy the word PRAYER on their papers and then decorate the word with stickers, glitter glue, or draw colorful designs. Remind the kids that prayer isn't magical; it is powerful! Gather the children together and ask God to powerfully answer their prayers. Allow each child an opportunity to pray.

## Lesson 10—Poison Test

The story so far...**A chief from another village was sick. Mary chose to help him even though it meant that she might be killed if the chief didn't get well. She prayed for him, gave him medicine and told him about Jesus. God healed the chief and the whole village heard about Jesus' healing power.**

Read the story from page 66 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Stand up for what is right.

### Discussion Questions:

**What happened to the chief's son?** (A tree fell on the chief's son and injured him.) **What happened while Mary was away?** (Villagers came and then the boy died. They blamed people from another village of putting a curse on him.)

**What order did the chief give?** (He ordered prisoners to be taken and given the poison test.) **What was the poison test? Do you think the poison test could really prove someone guilty or innocent? Why or why not?**

**What did the chief do that would go against what God says?** (He took prisoners and wanted to give them poison.) **How did Mary stand up for what was right? When have you stood up for what was right? Tell us about the experience.**

**Do you think it took courage to stand up to the powerful chief? Where did Mary get the courage to stand up for what was right? How can you get courage to stand up for what is right?**

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder to stand up for what is right.

Let the children use a sheet of paper to draw a picture of them that fills the paper. Then show the children how to fold the page into thirds with the face third on top and the other thirds folded under it. Give several examples of situations where children should stand up for what is right. Each time you give an example, the kids should quickly unfold the picture so it shows them standing up for what is right. Allow time for children to name situations. Pray with the kids and ask God to supply courage to each child to stand up for what is right.

## Lesson 11—Change of Heart

The story so far...**When the chief's son died, the villagers believed that someone in a neighboring village had put a curse on him. The chief ordered prisoners to be taken and given the poison test to determine their guilt or innocence. Mary begged the chief to stop this tradition and free the prisoners. When the chief wouldn't stop, she grabbed a prisoner and ran to the safety of her home. Finally, the chief listened and let the prisoners go free.**

Read the story from page 72 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Only God can change a person's heart.

### Discussion Questions:

**What did Chief Edem do that surprised Mary?** (He knelt at her feet and said that her ways were better than his old ways.) **Why did he change his ways?** (He could see that the message of Jesus was love and love was a better way than killing.) **Have you seen God's love change someone's heart?**

**What were some of the changes in the village?** (The villagers grew crops and traded them with other villages and a church and school were begun.)

**What new job did the British government ask Mary to do?** (Mary was asked to be like a judge.) **Why would this be a good job for her?** (She could help the people solve their problems following God's ways and not the old traditions that involved killing and poison tests.) **Do you think Mary would be a good judge? Why or why not?**

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder that God can change a person's heart.

Give each child a sheet of black construction paper. Make a large heart pattern for the children to trace and then cut out the heart. Talk about how sin makes our heart black or unclean. Only God is able to change a person's heart. Each time someone let's God's message of love change his or her heart, it is like cutting out a piece of the black and replacing it with something pretty. Have the kids cut out shapes from the black heart.

Cut colored tissue paper into one-inch squares and let the children glue or tape them on the backside of the heart to show the good change in the heart. Pray with the children and ask for God's love to change the children's hearts.

## Lesson 12—Servant of God

The story so far...**After years of working with the people, the chief's heart changed. He came to Mary and knelt as he told her that her ways that followed God's love were better than his ways of killing. Mary was asked to become like a judge for the area and she helped the people solve problems by following God's ways.**

Read the story from page 78 of the DiscipleLand Teacher Guide.

*Big Idea:* Keeping serving God your entire life.

### Discussion Questions:

**When Mary was the age that most people retire from work, she chose to go to a remote village. Why did she go?** (The people of that area needed to hear the Gospel message.) **Who helped her in the missionary work?** (Janie helped her.)

**What happened when Mary was too sick to walk?** (The kids pushed her around in a cart so she could attend the church and school.) **Would you have helped push Mary?**

**Mary asked the mission board to build a hospital. What surprised her?** (The hospital was named Mary Slessor Mission Hospital.)

**When Mary served God as a missionary, the area of Africa was called the Calabar. What is the modern day name of the country?** (Mary served God in the area known as Nigeria.) Help the children find Nigeria on a map. **Even today, there are monuments and reminders of the years Mary Slessor served God in Nigeria.**

### How can you serve God right now?

### Do Something About It...

*Objective:* Create a visual reminder about the life of Mary Slessor.

Have the students draw a picture of Mary Slessor. Talk about some of the things she did: went to Africa, learned the local language, went to tribes where no white person lived, taught children, rescued twin babies, gave medicine, told about Jesus, helped them end terrible customs, was a judge. Pray with the children and ask God to help them serve Him like Mary Slessor did.