



**DiscipleLand**

*Missions Education*

Level 2, Quarter D—The Bible Guides My Life

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

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## 2D—Missions Education

### The New Testament Message

**Teacher Intro**—God’s missionary plan has been in place since the beginning of time. In Jesus, God finally revealed the culmination of His wonderful plan. The New Testament message of redemption begins with God’s Son, is passed on to His closest friends, and then spreads like wildfire throughout the world. The events of the New Testament show God’s salvation being worked out by people who respond to Jesus with worship and obedience. Down through the centuries, Christ’s Church has continued the awesome work—Jesus’ Great Commission—to make disciples of all nations.

*Supply Notes:* Distribute sheets paper and pencils so kids may make drawings while they listen to the stories. They will complete the quarter with their own illustrated story of the church.

Use the following rhyme as often as you wish from lesson to lesson (based on “Here is the church...”):

*Let this be the Church* (hands folded together fingers inside)  
*It may have a steeple* (pinkies raised and touching)  
*But open the doors* (open thumbs)  
*And you’ll find—it’s the people!* (open hands to reveal fingers and wiggle)

### Lesson 1—The Church—What Is It?

**Supplies:** cookie jar, cookies

**Before we begin, I’d like to recite a little poem I learned when I was even younger than you. If you know this, please say it along with me.**

*This is the church;* (hands folded together fingers inside)  
*and here is the steeple;* (pinkies raised and touching)  
*Open the doors;* (open thumbs)  
*and see all the people!* (open hands to reveal fingers and wiggle)

Encourage kids to recite the poem with you if they know it, or learn it quickly.

**When you hear the word, “church,” what picture do you see in your mind?** Encourage responses. **Probably most people, when they hear the word, “church,” see a building.** Hold up folded hands from poem. **The truth is that “church” means, most of all (Open hands.) people. Next time we meet, we’ll review some things we learned from the Old Testament about a special place where God’s presence rested. We’ll think about some people who experienced the presence of God there. We’ll talk about how all of this pointed to Jesus and His death and resurrection.**

**Let’s draw a picture of a church building on your paper.** Encourage kids to position paper horizontally. **This will be the cover for a booklet that you will create during these lessons.**

Give children time to draw a picture of a church building. Be sure they put their names on their drawings and collect them when the lesson is finished.

## **Lesson 2—Jesus Brings a New Way**

Teach the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. **Long, long ago, God's people lived in a land on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea.** Point out this area on a map. **God's presence rested in a place called the Temple. This was a large building in Jerusalem. There were courtyards, outer and inner rooms, and a special place called the "holy of holies" where only a priest could go once a year to make sacrifices. A thick, heavy curtain hung in the doorway to the "holy of holies." Only those God invited came inside. Here God's very presence could be experienced.**

**The Temple was a place where people came to worship God, using the praise songs we have in our Bibles—praise songs called the Psalms. Read Psalm 48:9-10. The Temple was a place where God's people went to sacrifice the blood of animals so that God would forgive their sins. But God had a new plan to forgive people's sins—one that would fulfill His promise to Abraham to bless all nations.**

**When Jesus was growing up, He went with His parents to visit the Temple. He obeyed God's commands about Temple worship even when He was an adult. When Jesus died on the cross, the heavy curtain that blocked the inner place of God's dwelling was torn apart (Luke 23:45). When Jesus came back to life, a way was made for everyone to worship God directly and find forgiveness.**

**Now, part of the Temple still stands today in Jerusalem—a place where people can come to honor God. But all around the world, God's presence abides in places called "churches"—and among His people, the Church.**

**Jesus' death and resurrection was the act through which the people of all nations could be blessed. The Church carries this blessing in the form of the Good News about Jesus, also called the Gospel.**

**Do you want to know the "rest of the story?" We'll uncover the next part when we meet again.** Recite together the revised version of the rhyme.

## **Lesson 3—To the End of Time and the Ends of the Earth** **After Jesus came back to life and before He went up to heaven, He walked again with His disciples, teaching them many things.**

Read Matthew 28:18-20. **One of Jesus' last commands was to send His disciples to all nations. He told them to make disciples—to teach people to obey everything He had taught the first disciples. He promised to be with them to the very end of the age. In this case, "age" means a period of time. Jesus was saying that the Church's job, or commission, was going to last until the end of time.**

**Just before Jesus was taken up into heaven, He also promised that His disciples would be His witnesses to the very ends of the earth. Read Acts 1:8. This amazing promise was connected to the first disciples receiving and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. Notice here that "ends of the earth" has to do distance. Taken together, Jesus' promise for His Church was for the end of time and to the ends of the earth. And He promised to be with those who obeyed (Matthew 28:20).**

**It wasn't long before the first church came into existence. Next time we meet we'll talk about how that happened. Recite the rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. We'll find that the people in the first church didn't even have a building! It would be hundreds of years later before people began to think of a building when they heard the word, church.**

#### **Lesson 4—Starting on the Street**

**Who remembers what Jesus commanded His disciples to do in Matthew 28:19-20?** Encourage responses. **That's right—to make disciples, teaching them to obey the commands that Jesus had given to His disciples.**

**And who remembers what Jesus promised His disciples would happen after the Holy Spirit came (Acts 1:8)? They would be His witnesses starting in Jerusalem and going to the ends of the earth. In the very next chapter of Acts, we find the account of how that promise began to come true. Let's all turn to Acts 2.**

**It was a special holiday for the Jews—the Day of Pentecost. How long was it after Jesus' resurrection?** Let children respond—seven weeks. **The disciples and other believers were together in a house when God sent a miracle—the sound of a mighty wind storm and the sight of tongues of flame. The house where they were meeting got pretty crowded, so they spilled out doors and found that the noise had drawn quite a crowd.**

**Verse 5 holds a very important key to what was happening. These were “godly Jews from many nations” (Acts 2:9-11).** See if kids recognize any of the countries named and try to find those places on a map.

**The people who heard Peter were all Jewish by faith, but they were not all necessarily Jewish by birth. At this time, communities of Jews could be found all over the known world. And representatives of these countries were in this crowd. They were among the first to hear the Good News of Jesus' death and resurrection. And because of God's miracle, they could hear the Gospel in their own languages. Here were people from the “ends of the earth.”**

**At the end of Peter's speech the people asked what they could do. Peter told them to repent, believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins, and be baptized. By the end of the day, three thousand people responded, and were added to the disciples' number. The Church was born!** Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. **Next time, we'll discover what this first church did.**

#### **Lesson 5—The Importance of Homes**

**Last time we met, we talked about one of the most exciting days in all history. We read the account in Acts 2. Who can summarize what happened?** Let volunteers respond.

**Let's find out what happened next.** Read Acts 2:40-47. **Let's list what happened when Peter finished speaking.** Make three columns: “What the Apostles Did”; “What People Did”; and “What God Did.” Apostles—preached, taught, performed miracles, baptized new believers. People—believed, were baptized, joined with other believers, listened to the apostle's teaching, came together for fellowship, observed the Lord's Supper, prayed, shared everything they owned, sold what they owned and gave to the poor, worshiped at the Temple, met in homes for the Lord's Supper, shared meals with joy and generosity, praised God, enjoyed good will of everyone. God—forgave sins of the repentant, added believers to the church, gave a sense of awe.

If you have time, read Acts 4:32-35. Discuss what new insights these verses give to the character of the first church.

**As God did amazing things in people's lives, they began to meet together. They met to encourage each other, to share their joy, to help each other, to teach each other, and to worship God together. They met outside at the Temple and inside people's homes. More and more, God's people had church in their homes.** Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. **Homes may have been the first church buildings, but next time we'll learn that God had never intended people to stay there.**

## Lesson 6—Persecution Begins

Have the kids draw a fish on their papers as you illustrate it on a board—the *ikthus* symbol of the Church. Read Acts 6:7. **People preached the Gospel to more and more people in Jerusalem. What was the result?** Encourage responses. **Many, many people believed—even many priests. This did not go unnoticed by the religious leaders of the Jews. Stephen, a man full of God’s grace and power was arrested and executed (Acts 8:2). A great wave of persecution began. What happened as a result?** Read Acts 8:3—note that Saul was going from house to house, dragging believers into jails.

**Can anything good have come from this situation?** Read Act 8:4—believers in Jesus fled from Jerusalem. **The Bible says they went everywhere doing what?** Encourage responses. **Yes, “preaching the Good News about Jesus.” Do you think the believers would have done this without persecution?** Let kids speculate. **Maybe, but probably not as quickly as they did with persecution.**

**About the time the last apostle died, the Gospel had reached everywhere in the known world. There were believers in Jesus, meeting together from Great Britain to India, all over Southern Europe, North Africa, and even into Ethiopia. Show this expansive area on a map. In many places, believers met in secret. The fish symbol (point to the board) was used to identify these meetings.**

**Two things help the Gospel spread. One, established churches sent out messengers to tell others. The missionary journeys of Paul are well-known, but there were others who went out to make disciples. The second reason the Gospel spread was persecution.**

**You can read stories about believers meeting in secret—even in caves—to worship. Christians were accused of terrible things and suffered terrible deaths when they refused to deny Jesus. Instead of shrinking, the Church grew in numbers and influence. In less than 300 years, the Church became established in Rome, and the Emperor himself professed to be a Christian. By this time the Church was an organization and the organization built buildings—also called churches. Point out that, by this time, “church” meant people, organizations, and buildings, as it does today. Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. Next time we’ll begin meeting some people who helped the Church continue to grow and bless the people of all nations.**

## Lesson 7—Patrick of Ireland

**When the Good News of Jesus traveled westward, the messengers stopped short of what would become a very important island—Ireland. Show Ireland on a map. The Church was well established in Britain, where a man named Patrick Sucatus was born in the 300’s. Patrick’s father was a leader in the Church, but Patrick as a teenager didn’t take Jesus very seriously. Then something happened to change all that. A band of pirates invaded Patrick’s village and carried him off to Ireland!**

**There he was sold as a slave and assigned to herding his master’s animals out on the hillsides. Patrick had plenty of time to think about all the good things his father had taught him. Before long, Patrick was a true believer. He spent time praying and praising God.**

**After a few years, Patrick escaped from Ireland. He returned to his homeland and trained to be a leader in the Church. But he never forgot Ireland. Later, when he was in his forties, he had a vision of a man from Ireland calling to him back to bring the Gospel to this needy land.**

**Patrick did return to Ireland—the land where he had been a slave—and began to share the Good News of Jesus. At first, Patrick and his band of missionaries were persecuted. Church services were held in secret, deep in the forests. But, as time went by, not only were church buildings built, but whole communities formed, which had one primary purpose—to bring the Good News of Jesus to unbelievers.**

**Patrick ministered in Ireland for nearly thirty years, and God did many wonderful things through his leadership. Not only did Patrick bring the Church to Ireland, but he passed his vision on to men and women who became missionaries to Europe. The Church continued to grow to the ends of the earth. Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro.**

### Lesson 8—The Moravian Church

One of the greatest missionaries of the Church was a nobleman with a name that may sound funny to our ears—Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. He was born in 1700 into a wealthy German family. He studied law and religion in European universities.

Zinzendorf welcomed and sheltered Christian refugees to his land in Germany. Show Germany on a map. They formed a community and became known as the Moravian Church. They were very much like the communities that Patrick founded many hundred years before.

During the next hundred years, the Moravians sent members of their church all over the world. They preached the Good News of Jesus in northern India, East and South Africa, other parts of Europe, Greenland and Labrador, in Canada, Alaska, the West Coast of the USA, Central America, and the Caribbean. Show these areas on a map. All of this took place during the time that the United States of America became a country.

The Moravian Church still exists today. For almost 250 years, the Moravian church has published a daily Bible reading guide. It is still available today, printed in a book or available on-line.

Moravians were strong in their belief that missionaries should support themselves by practical skills and that they should go where the Good News of Jesus had not been heard—where a church had not yet been planted. Two men even sold themselves into slavery so they could witness to the slaves in the islands of the Caribbean.

Moravians were also known for their emphasis on intercessory prayer. At the home base in Germany, there was always someone in prayer for the missionaries, twenty four hours a day. Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. The Church continued to grow, but many people had forgotten about Jesus' words to His disciples after the resurrection. Next time we'll meet a man who challenged the Church to get down to business!

### Lesson 9—Father of Modern Missions

William Carey was born into a poor family in England in 1761. Show England on a map. He didn't go far in formal schooling. But while he worked as a cobbler, repairing people's shoes, he taught himself several languages and studied geography. By the time he was a young man, he knew a lot about the world.

William became a Christian as a young man and attended a church in England. Then, he became the pastor of a tiny group of believers. He added sermon preparation to his studies and his shoe repair work. He also got married.

William felt the Church had become too comfortable—too willing to ignore the outside world. Once, in a meeting of fellow pastors, he challenged the men to take Jesus' Great Commission seriously. Review Matthew 28:18-20. He urged them to consider how their congregations should obey Jesus' command to take the Gospel to all the nations. At first, not many men agreed with William. But he didn't give up, and before long pastors and their churches went together to form a missionary agency. It's not surprising that the first missionaries they sent out were William Carey and his family.

It took six months on a large sailing ship for the Careys to arrive in India. Even though it was a dangerous voyage, William began translating the Bible into the two Indian languages he had taught himself on the trip.

William Carey spent the rest of his long life in India. He introduced many new ideas which we take for granted today. For part of his time in India, he worked as a plant manager to support his family. He believed that missionary work should be carried out by teams of people sent out from the home base. He respected the part of the culture that was good, but he worked tirelessly to do away with customs that were evil. He respected the language and literature of the people.

Even today, William Carey is remembered and respected in India. Many of the ways our churches now do missionary work were started by Carey. Before he died, he became a university professor in India. But his heart always remained first with obedience to Jesus' command to make disciples. Not bad for a poor boy who barely finished eighth grade!

### Lesson 10—Innkeeper and Foot Inspector

Gladys Aylward was a small woman. She spoke softly and seemed very shy. She was very determined, though, when it came to obeying God's call. Gladys loved Jesus and wanted to serve Him in China. The British mission agency she applied to would not accept her as a missionary so she took a job as a parlor maid for a wealthy Christian family in London. She lived a very simple life style and saved her money until she could buy a ticket on a train that would take her from England to China, mostly across Russia. Show students that trip on a map.

It was a dangerous trip, but finally she arrived to help the missionary woman who welcomed her. Together the two women ran an inn for men and their mules, travelers who needed a place to stay for the night.

At first, Gladys made many mistakes. She felt very foolish. But, gradually, she learned the people's language. The two women discovered that the men loved to tell stories. So the missionaries told stories about Jesus after the evening meal. Many men came to know and love Jesus, and since they traveled all their life, they carried their faith with them.

The head man of the village eventually put his faith in Jesus, because of Gladys. The people in the town trusted her, so he appointed her to travel around urging the women to stop binding their feet. This practice was very painful for the women and almost made them cripples. Gladys also took in orphan children and taught them to love Jesus. When an invading army threatened to bomb the town, Gladys led a large band of children many, many miles to safety.

Although church, for Gladys Aylward, was very different from what we know and experience, many of her missionary practices are still carried out today. Because of Gladys, the Gospel gained a "foothold" in China! Close by reciting the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro.

### Lesson 11—Around the World and Back Again

Two thousand years is a long time. Our world is a big place. But the job Jesus gave the Church—to make disciples of all nations, continues.

About sixty years ago or so, the Good News of Jesus had reached every country on earth, except two. All cities on the coast lands of the world had groups of worshiping believers.

Church buildings in middle Africa often had grass roofs and mud brick walls. In North Africa believers might meet in desert tents. In the jungles of Asia, Christians find shelter from sun and rain under thatched roofs. Wherever the message that faith in Jesus brings forgiveness for our sins reaches, people gather to worship God just the way they are. The message remains the same all over the world, but it settles in each place in a way that the people can understand it best.

Remember, I said earlier on that there were two exceptions? One of them was the nation of Albania and the other was the nation of Mongolia. American Christians in the 1950's who attended prayer meetings for people who had not yet heard the Good News of Jesus, interceded for these two countries fervently. Now, strong churches exist in both places. Show Albania and Mongolia on a map.

Church buildings in Albania probably look like many in Europe: formal places with steeples and bells and long rows of benches with an organ in the balcony and stained glass windows all around. They may be simple auditoriums similar to what you have at school. The most interesting thing about today's church in Albania is that Christians were there at a time of war and were ready to reach out with Jesus' love and practical help to people who were fleeing from the fighting—to refugees. Christians, as the Church, were a blessing to the Albanians.

Next time, we'll look in on the Church in modern Mongolia.

## Lesson 12—To the Ends of the Earth

One of the most interesting stories about the Church comes from Mongolia. Show Mongolia on a map. For centuries, the Church was kept out of Mongolia by the religion called Buddhism. Then, for about seventy-five years, the Communist government kept missionaries out. But nearly twenty years ago, Jesus' message began to reach Mongolian people. It was brought, first of all, by people who knew the ways of Native Americans and pointed out the similarities between Indians in America and Mongolians. The Christian movie, *The JESUS Film*, also came to Mongolia. Some estimate that over half of all the people of Mongolia have seen this film. Then Christian English teachers were invited to teach in Mongolia's universities.

Now, there are many Mongolian believers worshiping on a regular basis. Most of them are either in large tents, called *gers* in Mongolia, or in theaters.

Mongolian Christians are a missionary people. They have already sent teams all over the world. Some go nearby within their own land, or north to Russia, or west to Kazakhstan. Show these places on a map. Some go to places very hostile to Christianity, like Afghanistan or China. In many places where the Mongolians go, churches are found mostly in homes and persecution of Christians is very common. Does this remind you of anything we learned earlier? Encourage responses.

The wonderful story of God's love advancing from Mongolia points us to a beautiful scene we can read about in Revelation. Read Revelation 7:9-10. Who will be before God's throne at the end of time? Encourage responses. Right. No people or place on earth will be left out at this celebration—all the earth and at the end of time.

Say together the revised rhyme found at the Teacher Intro. We can have a part in bringing the Church to the final frontiers of God's Kingdom on earth. We can start by praying for people groups who, even now, don't have the Church in their midst. Close with prayer. Include an unreached people group in your petitions.

Gather the pictures that each of the kids drew and staple them together.