



DiscipleLand

Missions Education

Level 5, Quarter C—Christian Champions

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

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5C—Missions Education

The Pioneers

Teacher Intro—In His day, Jesus sent the disciples ahead of Him to prepare towns for His arrival. In the American West, the brave men and women who ventured first into new and wild lands to blaze trails and establish communities were called pioneers. Someone must always go first to pave the way for others to come and take up the work.

Your children will appreciate the importance of missionary pioneers who venture into new territories for God's Kingdom. These ambassadors make first contact with a people who have never heard about Jesus Christ. The impressions they make, relationships they develop, and legacies they establish will impact the work and lives of all the Christians who come after them. Your kids will see how vital it is to be a pioneer in God's missionary plan.

Lesson 1—What Is a Pioneer?

Supplies: variety of unusual items, clothing, and/or foods from other cultures (or pictures of unusual items)

Show the children the items from other countries and cultures. Let them guess what the items are or how to use them. **It can be fun to guess how strange items are used. I can tell you about these items because someone else figured out how to use them and showed or told me. We benefit from someone else going, learning about these items, and bringing them to us.**

Imagine going to a place where everything is new to you and you don't know what to expect. You hear a language that you can't understand and you have no guidebook to tell you what the words mean. You see people dressed differently than you and eating foods that you have never seen or tasted before. Have you ever experienced anything like this? Allow kids to answer. **How do you think you would feel to be in a very new and strange place?** Encourage responses.

I've just described what a pioneer might experience. Pioneers are the first people to go to a new area. What they do there prepares the way for others to come. You've probably studied about early pioneers who traveled to the American West. Let children share what they've learned about pioneers. **Why did pioneers risk their lives to travel to the American West?** Encourage responses. **The first pioneers traveled to the American West and sent back reports that helped make the way easier for others to follow. As the pioneers learned to live**

in the new area, they helped the next group of people settle quicker and understand the new way of life.

Throughout history, pioneers have gone to new areas. Even missionaries have been pioneers. People like David Livingstone, Mary Slessor, Hudson Taylor, and William Carey went to areas where no one from their culture had lived before. Why do you think these missionary pioneers risked their lives to go to unreached areas? Encourage responses. **Today, missionary pioneers go to areas where people haven't heard Jesus' message or don't have anyone to help them grow in their relationship with God. This quarter we will learn how important it is for missionary pioneers to be first in an area and pave the way for other Christians come so that new people are reached with the Gospel message.**

Pray: Thank God for missionary pioneers who have prepared the way for others to reach people with the salvation message. Ask God to protect the missionary pioneers around the world today and allow them to learn how to reach people with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Lesson 2—Prepare to Be a Pioneer

Supplies: missionary support or fund raising letters, passport

What do you suppose the early American pioneers did to prepare before they set off to start a new life in the West? Encourage responses. **Just like early American pioneers saved their money, made plans, and left their families behind, so do missionary pioneers.**

Some missionary pioneers find paying jobs in their new “frontier.” These jobs provide a reason to be in a country that doesn’t allow missionaries. Most missionaries need to raise support money or have people promise to give money each month to pay the bills and costs of living. How would you approach someone and ask for financial support? Let the children share ideas with the class. If time allows, let kids role-play asking a friend to be part of their support team. **Missionary pioneers need people as part of their prayer support team also! Why is prayer important?** Encourage responses. **Who are some missionaries that you pray for?** Invite children to talk about who they pray for and some typical prayer requests they’ve made.

Missionary pioneers plan their trips carefully, completing the proper paperwork to enter some countries. Passports show where someone is from and get stamped when entering and exiting a different country. How many of you have a passport? Show your passport if you have one. Let children tell about the process of getting a passport and when they used their passports to travel. **A visa is a paper or sticker with special permission from the government for a person to enter the country. Even in Bible times, permission was needed to travel to some areas. In the Bible, Nehemiah went back to Jerusalem, a city that had been destroyed and abandoned, and asked the king for letters to carry with him that showed he had the king’s approval to travel there.** Read Nehemiah 2:7-9. Have the students pray for God to intervene with any paperwork issues that missionaries might be having right now.

Planning also includes knowing what to pack and take with you. Missionaries need to understand the area they go to and what things they will need and be able to use. What are some things you would need to take if you were pioneering in the jungle? In a desert area? In a small village by a river? Encourage responses.

In the pioneer days of long ago, families said good-bye and probably never saw each other again. Today, modern technology and quick transportation help families stay in touch. What are some ways missionary pioneers can stay in touch with their families? Let children respond.

Pray: Thank God that missionary pioneers are at work around the world and more are training right now! Ask God to send the financial support needed, to help missionary pioneers carefully make plans and get the visas needed as they prepare to say goodbye to their families.

Lesson 3—Learn the Language

Supplies: variety of language phrase books

How many languages do you think there are in the world? Let kids guess. A good estimate is about 6,000 languages. **That’s an amazing number of different languages!**

Set out the phrase books. Let the kids look through the phrase books and share some of the things they’d like to say in another language. Encourage kids to look up the words “please” and “thank you” in different languages and use those words during class.

Imagine being in an area without a phrase book to explain how to communicate with the people. How would you handle that situation? Encourage suggestions. **Missionary pioneers do a very important work by going to an area and learning the language. Some languages are only spoken—they don’t have a written language. Missionaries need to make a list of the sounds and then create a written code or alphabet for each sound. By carefully listening, watching, repeating, and writing down the sounds and words they learn, missionary pioneers can help the next missionaries by giving them a language guide or phrase book. Would you like to be a missionary pioneer creating an alphabet for a spoken language?** Encourage responses. **How would you feel to be a missionary entering an area where someone had already paved the way for you to know the language?** Allow children to answer.

Note: if you have Internet access, explore the language decoding and translation games at Wycliffe Bible Translator’s website for children: www.wycliffe.org/kids/home.htm Click on KC’s Challenge and then select “language.”

Pray: Thank God for the patience and perseverance of missionary pioneers who have created alphabets to write down languages. Ask God to help missionary pioneers quickly learn languages and know how to tell people about Jesus in these languages.

Lesson 4—Learn the Culture

Culture is the way of life of a group of people. If you have moved from one part of the country to another part, you may have noticed differences. Some people call a carbonated drink in a can “pop” and others say “soda.” Have the children raise their hand to vote if they say “pop” or “soda.” A Chicago style pizza has a thick crust and New York style has a thin crust. These differences show that people can have different ways of doing things. Encourage kids to comment on any differences they may have noticed.

Let the children answer these questions and discuss these cultural distinctives:

- **What might happen in your culture if you burped after a meal?** Let children answer. In some cultures, a burp at the end of the meal is a compliment to the cook!
- **How do you point to something in your culture?** Have the kids demonstrate. Ecuadorians don’t point at someone with their hands, they pucker their lips to point.
- **How do you show the number two with your fingers?** Have the kids show the number two with their fingers. In many countries the number two is shown with the thumb and index finger, but in the Philippines the ring finger and pinkie show two of something.
- **In your culture, what does it mean if you leave food on your plate?** Let children respond. In some cultures, you are rude if you *don’t* leave some food on your plate.

Many cultures don’t use the left hand to eat, wave, point or shake hands. If you were a left-handed missionary and started to eat using your left hand, you would offend the very people you came to reach. What would you do? Encourage responses. If you offend someone by rude behavior, will this same person desire to listen to you talk about God? Let kids respond. How will you know what behavior a culture finds offensive? Encourage suggestions.

When missionary pioneers go to an area, they learn the right way to say and do things so they won’t offend the people they are trying to reach with the Gospel message. By watching the way people interact with each other and what they do, missionaries can begin to understand the culture. It takes a long time to learn how to “fit in” to a culture that is new to you. How will the cultural information a missionary pioneer learns help other missionaries? Let the kids answer. Understanding a culture is a very important key to help missionaries effectively interact with people in a way that shows Christians as people who are kind, respectful, and who choose to do what is right.

Pray: Thank God that missionary pioneers are able to learn appropriate cultural behaviors. Ask God to help pioneers be patient as they learn about the new culture and discover the things that would make the most impact in that culture.

Lesson 5—Develop Relationships

Many cultures need to develop trust in an outsider or a person from another culture before they are willing to listen about God. One way to build trust is to work on relationships that eventually turn into friendships.

Jesus intentionally built relationships with people. He spent time mentoring His disciples and building relationships with those He ministered to. Read Luke 19:1-10. How did Zacchaeus’ life change because of the time Jesus invested in building a relationship with him? Encourage responses. How did this change affect others? (Zacchaeus gave back the money he overcharged people.)

As a missionary pioneer builds strong relationships with people, it opens them up to listen to the salvation message. People will recognize the missionary has something in his or her life that is different, attractive, and desirable. The missionary can show God’s love through words and actions. Instead of just reading Bible verses to the people, the missionary is making God’s Word real through living out the teachings and being Christ’s hands and feet to the people.

What are some creative ways for missionary pioneers to build relationships? Have the kids act out these scenarios to discover how these activities help missionary pioneers to intentionally connect with people to build a relationship:

- asking someone to show you how to prepare and cook the food the way they do
- going to the market together
- asking someone to help you learn the language
- letting someone teach you how to hunt
- have children suggest other ideas and act them out

The time invested in building relationships with people will build a good foundation for other missionaries who come later. Future missionaries will be able to step in and continue building on the trust began by the pioneers. Ministry to an unreached people will be stronger and more productive because the people have seen Christ’s love in action through relationships with missionary pioneers.

Pray: Praise God for being loving and helping missionary pioneers show His love through their relationships. Ask God to help missionary pioneers build relationships to help people see Christ in their lives through their words and actions.

Lesson 6—Teach About God

Supplies: coconut cut in half (optional)

In 1956, five missionary pioneers were murdered in the jungles of Ecuador. These missionaries pioneered a work that was carried on by others. As missionaries moved in and lived with the tribe, they learned more about the culture of the Waorani (also known as Waodani and Huaorani) people and built relationships with them. The missionaries realized that the tribe carved a mark along a trail through the jungle so they could follow the correct trail. The missionaries explained that God carved a trail for the Waorani to follow—the Bible! Many of the Waorani people chose to follow God’s trail because they understood the importance of following the right trail.

Missionary pioneers look for creative ways to explain God, Jesus, and concepts from the Bible by using things familiar to the people. How would you explain Isaiah 1:18 (“Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow”) to someone who had never seen snow? Encourage suggestions. Some missionaries, in areas without any snow, explain the concept of extreme whiteness using the inside of a coconut. Show the inside of a coconut if available.

The missionary pioneer has an important job to understand the unreached people’s culture and spiritual knowledge. This information will help future missionaries use effective word pictures and object lessons that explain God and Jesus’ forgiveness of sins.

What are some important concepts about God, Jesus, and salvation that a missionary pioneer would need to explain in a relevant way to a different culture? Allow time for the children to identify key concepts and discuss ways to explain those concepts.

Pray: Praise God that His Word is alive and active and able to speak to all people in all languages. Ask God to reveal to the missionary pioneers examples and word pictures that accurately explain God, Jesus, and salvation to an unreached people group.

Lesson 7—Disciple

What does “mentoring” mean? Allow responses. Have you been mentored or do you know someone who is being mentored? Let children share. Missionary pioneers need to invest time in mentoring or discipling new believers to grow in their new relationship with Jesus.

It is a great joy to see people begin a relationship with Jesus by accepting His forgiveness for their sins. As the tribe or community begins to question the new believer, he or she needs to be discipled or mentored in how to answer those questions and grow in faith.

Do you think mentoring someone is really as productive as preaching to crowds? Encourage responses. Let’s look in the Bible to see what effect one person’s mentoring of another person had on the world. Have kids look up the verses and explain the sequence of events that resulted from one man mentoring another.

- Acts 11:22-26 (Barnabas mentored Saul/Paul for a whole year)
- Acts 13:1-3 (Barnabas and Saul went out preaching together)
- Acts 16:1-5 (Paul mentored Timothy)
- Colossians 1:1-2, 7-8 (Paul and Timothy trained Epaphras, who worked in Colosse)
- Colossians 4:12-13 (Epaphras missionary to Laodicea and Hierapolis)
- Acts 19:10 (all the Jews and Greeks heard about Jesus in the province of Asia, also called Asia Minor)

Barnabas trained and discipled Saul. That laid the groundwork needed for Paul to mentor others and reach the entire area of Asia Minor for Christ! Missionary pioneers follow this example and disciple new believers to reach their own people. Why might a new believer among the people group have a bigger impact on his or her people than an outsider? Encourage responses.

What might happen to a new believer if a missionary led someone to become a Christian and then immediately left the country? Let the children answer. A missionary pioneer mentors new believers so that future missionaries will have a strong “native believer” to help reach the entire people group.

Pray: Thank God that missionary pioneers spend time discipling new believers. Ask God to give wisdom to the missionaries so they will speak words that encourage and help strengthen the new believers in their relationship with Christ.

Lesson 8—Develop a Body of Believers

Imagine being the *only* person in your *entire* city who believed in Jesus Christ as your savior. How would you feel? What would your life be like? Encourage responses. How would you feel and respond when just one more person became a believer?

Missionary pioneers know it is difficult for a new believer—so they work hard to strengthen the believer's faith in the face of questions or persecution. One person may have a hard time growing and staying strong in his or her decision to follow Christ. When the person has others who also follow Jesus, they can encourage each other and pray for one another. What ways could new believers encourage each other? Let kids answer.

As the missionary pioneer works with a small group of believers, the other people in the village or community will be watching for a real change in the believer's lives. What are some signs that show a real change in someone's life? Encourage responses. What might happen if no change appears in the new believer's life?

The missionary pioneer works with the new believers to help them learn about God together and begin to be witnesses of Christ's love and forgiveness. As the new believers show spiritual growth, they will be able to disciple other believers from their village. It may take a long time for more people to become followers of Christ, but the seeds of God's truths have been planted in the hearts of the people. The future missionaries can step in and begin to water the seeds that can bring a harvest of believers. Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. Discuss the spiritual analogy and relate it to your own life or people from your church who plant spiritual seeds and water the seeds.

Pray: Thank God for missionary pioneers who plant seeds and others who come along and water those seeds to help people choose to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask God to encourage missionaries to continue helping new believers grow spiritually and to have a strong witness that helps more people believe in Jesus as their Savior.

Lesson 9—Empower Them

Ask a volunteer to read Mark 3:14-15. Jesus took twelve men to teach so He could send them out to preach. Jesus took time to train them and then released them to go and make more disciples. Jesus knew He wouldn't always be there and needed the disciples to be able to go and impact the people around them.

A missionary pioneer can empower the believers as they mature in their relationship with Christ to begin to reach their community with the Gospel message. The believers will have a powerful impact on their own people and be able to continue impacting their village when the missionary pioneer leaves the area. Part of empowering new believers is to encourage them and equip them with the knowledge of God's Word and the tools or resources to share their faith in a variety of ways.

The missionary and believers look for opportunities to witness or show God's love through acts of kindness and compassion towards others in the village or community. For example, a missionary might notice one of the believers lives in a neighborhood with many children. The missionary has a copy of the movie *The Story of Jesus for Children*. The believer can show the film and begin to minister to the children.

What other ways can you imagine to empower believers to reach out to people in their community? Encourage children to consider different options for believers in a remote village, small community, and a city. How do you think the believers feel when missionaries empower them to share their faith? Allow responses. As future missionaries come, they will find believers who are actively sharing their faith and making an impact on the community.

Do you feel empowered to do ministry or share your faith with others? Let kids answer. Discuss ways the children are empowered through their parents and the church. You may want to brainstorm a way for the class to do an outreach such as handing out snacks and water bottles in a park.

Pray: Praise God for encouraging and empowering all Christians to share their faith with others. Ask God to bring many opportunities for believers in unreached areas to be empowered to show God's love and tell about Jesus to the unsaved people around them.

Lesson 10—Install Them as Leaders

How would you describe a typical service at our church?

Encourage each child to contribute to the description of the worship and teaching at your church. **If we started a church in a jungle, would the service be just like the one here?** Let the children explain how and why it might need to be different such as no electricity for a worship band with modern instruments, baptism might be in a river, no church building, no children's ministry area, etc.

The Bible doesn't list rules for a church service. A missionary pioneer wants to help the new Christians worship God in a way that fits with the believers' culture. Long ago, some missionary pioneers insisted that new believers worship God the way the missionaries did in their home countries. Sometimes this kept the people from offering heartfelt worship to God.

Today, most missionary pioneers want the believers to lead their own churches and to help create a worship service that fits with their culture. In what ways might it be easy for missionaries to let the believers lead their own churches? In what ways might it be hard for missionaries to let the believers lead their own churches? Encourage responses.

Imagine that you are a missionary pioneer in a small African village. What might a church service be like if the villagers lead the service? Encourage responses. **When other missionaries come later to the village, they will appreciate that the missionary pioneer helped guide the people spiritually, but let them create a worship experience that fit with their own culture.**

Pray: Thank God for Christians in the villages and communities who are willing to lead their own people to know Jesus Christ as their savior. Ask God to give wisdom to missionaries to assist new leaders so they will effectively reach the community with God's love and salvation message.

Lesson 11—Support Them as They Grow

Read Matthew 28:19-20 to the group. **Which parts of Jesus' command do missionary pioneers follow?** (They go to an unreached place, make disciples, baptize them, and teach them to obey God's commands.) **A missionary will continue to teach and guide the believers as they grow in number and begin to lead their own groups and churches.**

The missionary pioneer and other missionaries that follow can offer help and support in many ways. Some missionaries involve their churches back home and people on their own support team to help the new church by sending resources such as money, literature, or needed supplies. If a group of believers need a larger place to meet, a missionary might help them rent a building or even encourage a short term missions trip for people to come and help build a building with them. What are some other ways that missionaries can help and give support to the believers as they grow in number of believers? Encourage responses.

How do you think missionaries feel as they see churches grow where there once weren't any? Let kids answer. **Churches don't always need financial support from missionaries—they really need spiritual support. The missionaries can continue to encourage the leaders to read and understand the Bible. They can spend time in prayer with the leaders and for the new church leaders. As future missionaries come, they will be able to step in and offer support to the existing churches and church leaders and together they can continue to reach the community with the Good News of Jesus Christ.**

Pray: Thank God for the support missionaries give to help new churches grow. Ask God to send encouragement to the missionaries and the new church leaders so they will continue to work well together and grow in their community.

Lesson 12—New Pioneers Needed

Supplies: variety of maps, masking tape

Bring in several maps and let the kids look at them. **What ways do mapmakers acquire information to make these maps?** Encourage the children to think about modern methods and older methods of people going and creating maps. **When you follow a map to a place you want to visit, you are thankful for the people who gathered the information so that you could benefit from having a map. This is how missionaries feel when they go to an area where a missionary pioneer has paved the way and done some very hard work. A missionary pioneer is like the original mapmaker and the future missionaries use the map to guide them to work with the people.**

Today, missionary pioneers are still needed all around the world to gather information and begin the work of reaching unreached people groups. Now that we've learned about missionary pioneers, let's create a list of characteristics that are needed for missionary pioneers. Invite the children to name different characteristics such as perseverance, courage, deep relationship with God, etc. On the chalkboard draw an outline of a person. As you talk about each characteristic of a pioneer, write the characteristic inside the outline.

God doesn't call everyone to be a missionary pioneer. Let's see how we rate ourselves with having the characteristics of a missionary pioneer. On the floor, use masking tape to make a long line and at one end put a 0 and the other end a 10. **As I name a characteristic, you can stand on the line to mark where you would rate that characteristic in yourself—0 is low and 10 is high.** Read a characteristic from the list on the board and let the children stand somewhere on the line. Ask for volunteers to explain why they rated themselves the way they did. Continue with each characteristic from the class list on the board.

Someday, you may feel God wants you to be a missionary pioneer or you may be a missionary who benefits from a pioneer's work. One thing we can all do right now is to pray for missionary pioneers. Spend time praying for missionary pioneers to have the characteristics mentioned by the class and to be effective in their pioneer work of growing God's kingdom in places where it doesn't yet exist!

Pray: Praise God for being the One True God who is worthy of all praise from all people around the world. Ask God to send missionary pioneers to work in areas that don't yet experience worshipping God.