



**DiscipleLand**

*Missionary Biography Questions*

Level 6, Quarter D—Jonathan Goforth

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

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## 6D—Missionary Biography

Jonathan Goforth

### Teacher Intro—JONATHAN GOFORTH (1859—1936)

Jonathan Goforth chose to accept God's call to go to China. Life in China was difficult, and the Goforths faced many terrible situations: fire that destroyed their belongings, the deaths of five children, ravaging diseases, mobs that tried to kill them, and even blindness. Yet, throughout his life, Jonathan's faith never wavered. In fact, each difficulty seemed to strengthen his faith. He allowed the Holy Spirit to lead and empower him in each task. He gained the respect of the Chinese and his fellow missionaries as he preached his way across China, one village at a time.

### Lesson 1—Young Goforth

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

*Big Idea:* God wants to be involved in your life now—not just when you become an adult!

#### Discussion Questions:

**Do you know the meaning of your first or last name? If so, do you live up to the meaning?**

**In the past, sometimes missionaries gave new converts to Christianity from other cultures a “Christian” name to reflect their new relationship with Jesus. If you could choose a name with a strong Christian meaning, what would you choose?**

**As a young child, Jonathan memorized much of the book of Psalms. Do you know any Psalms from memory? Say them. Why is it important to memorize Scripture?**

**God protected Jonathan's life twice while he was young. What are some examples of God's protection on your own life or someone you know?**

**How do you guess Jonathan felt knowing God had clearly protected him twice?**

**God was involved in Jonathan's childhood through protecting him and Jonathan's memorization of Scriptures. What are some ways you let God be involved in your life?**

### Lesson 2—College Days

The story so far... **Jonathan Goforth spent much of his childhood reading and memorizing Psalms. Twice during childhood God had protected him from death, giving Jonathan a sense that God had a plan to use him.**

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

*Big Idea:* God honors dedication to Him.

#### Discussion Questions:

**As a young boy, Jonathan was taught to read and memorize the Scriptures. He didn't hear the salvation message until he was 18. How often does your church explain salvation? Have you learned about salvation at home?**

**Jonathan's life changed when he gave his life to Christ. How did his life change again when he dedicated his life to telling others about Jesus? How has your life changed if you have already asked Jesus to be your savior? If you haven't, why not ask Him into your heart right now?**

**How was Jonathan treated at college? How did he respond? How would you respond to a similar situation?**

**How did Jonathan respond to the prisoners who didn't believe in God? What would you say to someone who didn't believe in God?**

### Lesson 3—Off to China

The story so far...**At the age of 18, Jonathan gave his life to Christ and dedicated his life to telling others about Jesus. He overcame the ridicule of his fellow college students and won their respect. He served God in the slums and jails of Toronto.**

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

*Big Idea:* God brings people together to do His work.

#### Discussion Questions:

**How did God use a missionary to influence Jonathan?**

**Have you heard a missionary speak? Have you felt God asking you to go to the mission field someday or be involved in missions in another way?**

**What did Rosalind notice about Jonathan's Bible? Why do you think that inspired her to want to marry him?**

**Why didn't Jonathan give Rosalind an engagement ring?**

**Do you desire to marry someone who puts God first or who puts you first? Why?**

**What happened shortly after they married?**

### Lesson 4—Fire!

The story so far...**Jonathan heard a missionary speak and decided God was calling him to China. He met and married Rosalind. His former college and the Presbyterian Church of Canada sent the Goforths to China as missionaries.**

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

*Big Idea:* God turns bad situations into things that help us grow closer to Him.

#### Discussion Questions:

**Do you know any Chinese words? (Bring in examples of Chinese characters or have a Chinese speaker talk to your class about the difficulties of learning the tonal language of Chinese.) Chinese is a very difficult language to learn. Do you learn languages easily? What language would you like to learn? How can you begin to learn it now?**

**Have you experienced or known anyone who lost things in a house fire? How did they respond? How did Jonathan respond to the fire? How did Rosalind respond to the fire?**

**Read Romans 8:28. How did the fire work for the good of the Goforths? Why did Jonathan and Rosalind's attitude about the fire matter?**

**If you were a missionary, would you stay in the foreign country after a personal disaster? How does this experience from the Goforth's life help you know how to target prayers for missionaries? Take time and pray for missionaries who are going through a personal tragedy to allow God to work good out of the situation.**

## Lesson 5—Promised Land

The story so far...A terrible fire destroyed everything the Goforths had brought with them from Canada. They realized things didn't matter—the only thing that mattered was telling the Chinese people about Jesus!

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

*Big Idea:* God wants us to do the work He prepared us to do—even through hard times!

### Discussion Questions:

Read Isaiah 55:10-11. Why was this verse perfect for Jonathan on the day he read it?

What thoughts and feelings would you have if you looked over the new place where God had placed you?

What do you know about Hudson Taylor? How does God use missionaries to encourage other missionaries?

What slogan would you use for your life right now? What slogan might you choose if you go to the mission field?

Missionaries face many hardships on a mission field. What are some things you can pray for missionaries who face hardships? Take time to pray for missionaries to continue to do God's work.

## Lesson 6—Language Breakthrough!

The story so far...Jonathan and Rosalind moved to the North Honan province of China—their promised land. Hudson Taylor encouraged them to go forward “on their knees.” This prayer reminder also helped them remain faithful to the task in China, even after the death of five of their children.

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

*Big Idea:* God answers prayers!

### Discussion Questions:

Read Zechariah 4:6. How did this verse help Jonathan with his Chinese language study?

Each person has different learning styles such as visual (seeing) or auditory (hearing). Some learning styles can make learning a language easy and others make it very difficult. What learning style might help a person speak a language? (Hint: the person would want to hear and remember the sounds.) What learning style might help a person with the written part of language?

People who are visual would make good translators of a written language. People who easily hear and remember a language would be good at witnessing and preaching in a foreign language. What style of learning do you think you have?

What miracle did Jonathan experience? Have you ever experienced a miracle? Explain.

We don't always get to hear the exact time or way our prayers were answered like the college kids' prayers for Jonathan were answered. What amazing answers to prayer have you experienced?

### Lesson 7—Dedication and Danger

The story so far...Jonathan Goforth struggled to learn the difficult Chinese language. One day he acknowledged that God called him to China and expected a miracle of the Holy Spirit empowering him to speak Chinese. Unknown to him, a group of students in Canada were praying for him at that exact time. As he preached that day—he spoke fluently in Chinese!

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

*Big Idea:* God has a job for you to do and will help you do it!

#### Discussion Questions:

Is it wrong for missionaries to spend time on themselves? Why or why not? If you were a missionary, how would you spend your extra time?

Why did Rosalind thank God for a husband who put “first things first?”

Jonathan chose to wear Chinese clothing. Do you think missionaries should dress like the local people? Why or why not? Would you dress like the local people?

How did a gust of wind show God was watching over Jonathan and his companion? Have you experienced something like that? Why was Jonathan safe as he preached to the Chinese?

### Lesson 8—Open House

The story so far...Jonathan remains dedicated to spend his time putting “first things first.” Preaching to the Chinese always came first, even when the Chinese people became anti-foreign. Jonathan escaped from danger many times with God’s help.

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

*Big Idea:* God can use anything we have as a tool to reach people with the Gospel.

#### Discussion Questions:

Do you think the Goforths should have given tours of their home? Why or why not? How might this cause problems in reaching the Chinese with the Gospel? How might this help them reach the Chinese with the Gospel?

What made their home unusual to the Chinese?

How do you think the Goforths responded to the missing household items? (Base your answer on what you know about their response to losing everything in a fire.)

Have you ever invited people over to your home to tell them about Jesus? How might this help give opportunities to share the salvation message?

What creative way could you use your home or something you own as a way to tell others about Jesus?

### Lesson 9—Escape!

The story so far...Jonathan and Rosalind opened their home to the Chinese people. Every day hundreds came to see the foreigner's things, but first they had to listen to a sermon.

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

*Big Idea:* God desires His followers to trust Him to lead them out of a difficult situation.

#### Discussion Questions:

In 1900, the Boxer Rebellion—also known as the Boxer Uprising—began and resulted in hundreds of missionaries, including women and children, and thousands of Chinese Christians being murdered. What have you learned in school about the Boxers?

Why do you think God allowed this to happen?

How do you think the Goforths felt knowing they survived and other missionaries didn't?

How do you think the Goforth's children felt as they saw mobs of people that wanted to kill them? How would you respond to that kind of situation?

What do you think their prayers were like?

What areas of the world are dangerous for missionaries today? Take time and pray for missionaries in dangerous situations around the world.

### Lesson 10—Return to China

The story so far...In 1900, China became unsafe for any foreigners. As the Goforths tried to escape, angry crowds tried to kill them. God's protection was evident many times on the journey to the steamship that took them to Canada.

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

*Big Idea:* God wants us to trust Him entirely with our precious possessions and our future.

#### Discussion Questions:

Why didn't the Goforths stay in Canada?

Would you have returned to China? How do you think the children felt about returning to Canada? Do you think it is important for the missionary kids to have a good attitude about being missionaries? Pray for missionary kids to have good attitudes about going to a foreign country and doing God's work.

What was Jonathan's evangelization plan? Would you have joined him in that plan? Why didn't Rosalind want to join in the plan? What changed her mind?

Do you think you would be able to trust God to protect and take care of your children? How had God shown he was trustworthy to the Goforth family?

What do you have a hard time trusting God with? How can you build confidence to trust God with it?

### Lesson 11—Revival

The story so far...**As soon as it was safe, Jonathan returned to China. His wife and family joined him, but Rosalind hesitated to take the children to the rural areas filled with diseases. Finally, she realized she could trust God with her children. The family evangelized many communities.**

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

*Big Idea:* The Holy Spirit softens hearts to receive the Gospel message.

#### Discussion Questions:

**What is a “revival?” Have you ever attended a revival meeting? Describe it.**

**Jonathan preached three hours at a time, several times a day. What is the longest you’ve heard someone preach? Why don’t preachers preach for several hours?**

**How do you think Rosalind and the children felt to be separated from Jonathan?**

**Imagine what it would be like to speak every day to crowds of a thousand people. Would you enjoy the experience? Why or why not? What is the largest audience you’ve spoken in front of? Would you be willing to preach if God called you to be a preacher? A missionary?**

**Have you ever sent money to a missionary? Why? What happened? When Jonathan contacted the woman who sent the money, she was joyous that her check was an answer to prayer. Have you experienced any amazing answers to prayer? Explain.**

### Lesson 12—Not Finished Yet

The story so far...**Jonathan longed for revival to sweep through China. His prayers were answered as he preached at revival meetings. Thousands of people heard the Gospel message and responded.**

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

*Big Idea:* God’s continues to grow a harvest with the seeds planted through the life of Jonathan Goforth.

#### Discussion Questions:

Check online or at your church’s library for books written by Jonathan Goforth. Bring one in and read some of the stories to your kids.

**Why didn’t blindness slow down Jonathan?**

**Do you think Jonathan was satisfied with how his life turned out? Why or why not?**

**What was your favorite story from Jonathan’s life? How does the story of Jonathan Goforth affect you?**

**Would you like to be a missionary? Where would you like to go serve God?**