



Teaching Guide for Students

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Leader Background Information

Kentucky Baptists observe the Season of Prayer for State Missions in September. The suggested date is September 9-16, 2018. This year's theme is *Testify!* In Acts 20, we find Paul traveling to Jerusalem. After changing his route due to a perceived threat, Paul spends time in Miletus where he meets with the Ephesian church elders who have come down at his request. During this meeting he says to them, "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24) Paul could not have made it any clearer. The gospel of the grace of God is of utmost importance.

Throughout Kentucky, there are men, women, and students of all ages who are facing a future, both physical and spiritual, that is devoid of hope. Kentucky Baptists are called to place a priority on sharing the good news of the hope and healing that can be found only in Jesus. We have been called to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

During this study, students will learn about Operation Give Hope, an event sponsored by the Rockcastle Baptist Association. Operation Give Hope is one of the many Christmas Backpack Project events that happen in our state. Through the witness of faithful volunteers, and the gift of a backpack filled with necessities, gifts, and goodies, children from around Rockcastle County are hearing the gospel of grace and hope.

This study may be used in place of a regular session of Acteens, Challengers, or Youth on Mission, or with any group of students. You may also choose to set aside a special time for this study during the Season of Prayer for State Missions.

Preparation

- Read "**Operation Give Hope**" (included with this material) to learn more about the ministry highlighted in this study.
- You may also wish to download the Testify! Master Article for 2018 which contains additional information about ministries in Kentucky. This article, videos, and other materials are available at kywmu.org/ebo.
- Study Acts 20:17-24. Read the "Bible Study Background Information" included with this material and Acts 18:23 – 21:26 to deepen your understanding of this passage. Provide Bibles for the students. Students may prefer to use an electronic version on their phones.
- Go to kybaptist.org/backpacks and learn more about the Christmas Backpack Project. At this site you will find information on what to pack in a backpack, where the backpacks are being collected, and where they will be used throughout Kentucky. There is also a video that you can show to your students. If possible, download the video in preparation for the lesson.
- As a part of this study, it is suggested that you have your students (collectively or individually) pack a backpack for the Christmas Backpack Project. Use the information provided at the website to guide you in this mission project. One possible way to do this is by providing the new backpack yourself and asking the students to bring with them items to be placed in the backpack.
- Have 2018 Testify prayer guides and Eliza Broadus Offering envelopes available. Consider enlisting a student to lead the closing prayer time.

Bible Study Background Information

The completion of Paul's third missionary journey finds him in Corinth ready to go to Jerusalem. Some of the highlights from this journey included taking up a collection from the churches in Macedonia and Asia to help the poorer church members in Jerusalem, spending three years working with the church in Ephesus, and writing several letters that are now a part of the New Testament.

Paul's motivation for going to Jerusalem is two-fold. One, he wants to deliver the love offering to the people in the church who will distribute it to the poor members. And two, he feels compelled by the Spirit to go, knowing full well that this compelling carries with it the understanding that he will very likely be imprisoned and put on trial.

From the onset, the trip is beset with danger as Paul learns of a Jewish plot against his life. To avoid this threat, which was likely to be carried out while he was at sea, he decides to travel overland through Macedonia. Paul arrives in Philippi where he celebrates the Festival of Unleavened Bread. He then boards a boat and travels to Miletus via Troas and Assos. Realizing that he will be several days in Miletus, he sends for the elders of the church in Ephesus (which was about 50 miles north), asking them to come down to him. Acts 20:17-24 contains a portion of his address to the Ephesian elders.

Leading the Session

1. Ask students these questions, "What are some things that are important in your life?" "What would you say are the top three things, in order of priority?" "Are any of these things more important than your very life?"
2. Have the students open their Bibles to Acts 20:17-24.
3. Say, "The theme for the Eliza Broadus Offering is **Testify!** In today's lesson we are going to talk about Paul and what he saw as the highest priority in his life."
4. Ask for a volunteer to read aloud Acts 20:17-24.
5. Discuss the following questions with your students:
 - Based upon his statement in vss. 17-21, how had Paul lived his life among the believers at Ephesus? (Answers might include service, humility, tears, trials, proclamation, and teaching [both publicly and privately] in homes.)
 - What did Paul proclaim and teach? (repentance toward God, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ)
 - In vss. 22-23, Paul says he is being constrained by the Spirit to go to Jerusalem. What was he anticipating would happen? (imprisonment, affliction)
 - In v. 24, Paul says he does not count his life as valuable or precious. According to this verse, what is it that Paul finds to be more valuable than his life? (finishing the course, the ministry he received, testifying to the gospel of the grace of God).
 - Have the students recall the things they said were important in their lives. Ask: Is the Gospel of grace more important than these things? Is the Gospel of grace more important than your very life?
6. Share with your students the story of "Operation Give Hope." You may do this in one of two ways. Summarize and/or read for them the 2018 Testify! Master Article section entitled "Operation Give Hope." Or you may give each student a copy of this section to read for themselves silently. Break from the story at the end of the paragraph where Katheryn Pope says, "Nothing surpasses the joy of knowing people are getting saved because of our efforts."
7. Show students the video that is available at kybaptist.org/backpacks.
8. Discuss the following questions with your students:

- What activity led to the creation of the outreach event known as “Operation Give Hope?” (Katheryn Pope and 15 people from Rockcastle Association went on a mission trip to Romania. When they returned they recognized the need for local outreach events like the ones they did in Romania.)
- Where is Operation Give Hope held? (A middle school cafeteria and gymnasium.)
- What other groups participate in Operation Give Hope? (Celebrate Recovery participants, a Christian church, a Catholic church, the local school system, and other individuals.)
- During Operation Give Hope, backpacks are distributed to children in need. What is typically in one of these backpacks? (Toys, coats, blankets, a copy of the Christmas story.)
- These backpacks are part of a larger project. What is this project called? (Christmas Backpack Project)
- Approximately 1500 children have received backpacks in Rockcastle Association over the last two years. What other results have come out of this event? (There have been many decisions for Christ.)
- Besides the children, who else has heard the Gospel of grace during Operation Give Hope? (Parents and grandparents)
- What other ministry events does Katheryn Pope (a Kentucky MSC missionary) coordinate at the Community Center in Brodhead? (Summer Feeding for Kids, Celebrate Recovery, Back to School Bash, women’s Bible studies, and Feeding the Flock Pantry.)



2017 Operation Give Hope Flyer

9. Say to your students: Katheryn Pope’s life has been changed because she has found there is nothing more important than testifying to the Gospel of grace and seeing the people of her community come to faith in Jesus. As Katheryn says in the article, “Nothing surpasses the joy of knowing people are getting saved because of our efforts.”
10. Mission Project: If you have chosen to pack a backpack as a part of the Christmas Backpack Project, complete that mission project at this time.
11. Distribute Eliza Broadus Offering envelopes. Share with students about how Operation Give Hope is one of the many ministries around Kentucky that receive funds from the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions. Encourage students to give to EBO to support Operation Give Hope and other ministries in Kentucky.
12. Close your time together by praying for Katheryn Pope, Operation Give Hope, and the Eliza Broadus Offering for State Missions. (Use the prayer requests listed at the end of the Operation Give Hope section in the Testify! Master Article as well as requests from the 2018 State Missions Prayer Guide.)

About the writer: Jon Auten serves as Missions Consultant for Royal Ambassadors, Challengers, and Youth on Mission for Kentucky WMU. He is an RA leader and Sunday School teacher at Highland Park First Baptist Church, Louisville.



Operation Give Hope Rockcastle Association Offers Hope while Meeting Needs

What can unite 15-17 churches in a Baptist association, Celebrate Recovery participants, a Christian church, Catholic Church, local school system, plus a variety of other groups and individuals? Ask Teresa Parrett, Missions Mobilization Coordinator for the Kentucky Baptist Convention, and Katheryn Pope. They can tell you all about Operation Give Hope, sponsored by the Rockcastle Baptist Association and coordinated by Katheryn, a Mission Service Corps Missionary. They hold the event in a middle school cafeteria and gymnasium. Celebrate Recovery participants give testimonies. Individuals and groups sing. They serve food and give away backpacks, toys, coats, and blankets to children in need.



Director of Missions, Randy McPherson, had a vision for a county-wide event where every child would be ministered to and receive a new toy. Operation Give Hope was born and has grown every year.

One of many **Christmas Backpack Project** events, Rockcastle Association has it down to an art. However, Teresa and Katheryn will also tell about the tremendous amount of work required. As Katheryn said, "Even though I know God's got this, the enormity of it all overwhelms me at times."

Katheryn was commissioned as a MSC Missionary in April, 2015 but her work actually began in 2011. She led 15 people from Rockcastle Association on a mission trip to Romania. After their trip, they recognized the local need for outreach events similar to those they did abroad. They formed a Community Mission Team with Katheryn as coordinator. They have done a variety of outreach projects including several backyard Vacation Bible Schools and winter soup kitchens, as well as Operation Give Hope, initially called "Love in a Box."

In the last two years, Rockcastle association has served approximately 1,500 children with Christmas backpacks, coats, blankets, and toys. They have also seen many decisions for Christ. Other events Katheryn coordinates at the Community Outreach Center in Brodhead include the Summer Feeding for Kids, Celebrate Recovery, Back to School Bash, women's Bible studies, and Feeding the Flock Food Pantry.

What is the Backpack Project?

- The Christmas Backpack Project began in 2001 by a GA Leader with North Lanier Baptist Church in Georgia. They prepared shoe boxes for children in need.
- In 2012 the project changed to backpacks rather than shoe boxes to distinguish their program from Samaritan's Purse.
- Bill Barker, Director of Appalachian Regional Ministry until December, 2017, was instrumental in spreading the backpack project across the Appalachian Regional Ministry and Mississippi River Ministry areas.
- Along with backpacks filled with necessities, gifts, and goodies, children receive a copy of the Christmas story. They can also join the Mailbox club, an age-appropriate Bible study by mail.
- In 2016, 2,144 churches distributed 53,589 Christmas backpacks. They saw 1,531 salvation decisions made. The 2017 goal was 65,000 backpacks.



Although Operation Give Hope consumes tremendous amounts of time and energy, Teresa and Katheryn love it. The smiles on children's faces, gratitude of parents, and cooperative efforts among the churches and missionaries make all their work worthwhile. Katheryn said, "Nothing

surpasses the joy of knowing people are getting saved because of our efforts."

If you want to help with Operation Give Hope, needs include new toys and new and gently used blankets and coats. You can contact Kathryn Pope at 606-308-3099 or the Rockcastle Baptist Association office at 606-256-4571.

You can also participate in the **2018 Kentucky Christmas Backpacks Project** by collecting backpacks filled with requested items. Use your state missions emphasis as a kick-off time for the project with all backpacks collected by the end of September. Visit the Kentucky Baptist Backpack Project web page for information on collection sites.

As you share the Backpack Project in your church, please pray for each ministry which will distribute the backpacks and share the gospel. As Kathryn said, "The greatest thing anyone can do for the backpack ministry is pray."

Prayer Requests:

- * Pray that children and adults hear the gospel, the true meaning of Christmas.
- * Pray that many accept the Christ of Christmas as their personal Savior and Lord.
- * Pray that God will be glorified.

Go Further

Will you:

- *Pray?
- *Participate?
- *Partner?

Visit the Christmas Backpacks Project web page, download all needed information, and start planning how your church will participate.

www.kybaptist.org/backpacks



Kentucky's Backpack Project

- Kentucky's first statewide Backpack Project began in 2017 as a *partnership with the North American Mission Board and Kentucky Woman's Missionary Union*. Churches, associations, and other ministries host backpack outreach events.
- Activities at the Backpack Project sites may be as simple as a birthday party for Jesus with cake, punch, the Christmas story, and backpack distribution. Larger ones include Cedaridge Ministry's in Williamsburg that reached 2,000 children and families.
- Teresa Parrett is the Kentucky Baptist representative for Appalachian Regional Ministry and Mississippi River Ministry.
- In February Teresa sends backpack applications to churches, associations, and ministries that reach out to needy families and children in Kentucky. She forwards completed applications to Bill (or his successor), who matches churches filling backpacks with those requesting them.
- With a 2017 goal of 5,000 backpacks, Kentucky Baptists collected over 8,000. The goal for 2018 is 10,000!.
- Backpacks must be delivered to associational collection sites between October 15-19, 2018.
- Be sure to read the new instructions for 2018.