

Missions Lesson
IMB Affinity Group: The Americas

January, Week 1

By Karen Wright

Objectives:

- Children will be able to identify characteristics of three different cultures in the Americas.
- Children will identify needs of children in the Americas, especially the need to know Jesus.
- Children will pray for children in the Americas and promise to continue praying.

Materials:

- A map of the Americas
- Pictures of cities, the desert, mountains, small towns, and rural areas

Preparation:

- Give stories (below) to 3 children ahead of time in order to practice reading them. In the case of a very young group, the leaders can read the stories.
- Print prayer requests from stories on individual cards for children to take home.
- Spread pictures of cities, the mountains, etc. on a table or post them on the wall.

Procedures:

1. Point to the pictures you have displayed and ask: "*Which of these pictures makes you think of Central or South America? Why?*"
2. Ask children to look at the map and ask them if they know someone from a country in the Americas other than the United States. There may be children from Mexico in the group, or they may have classmates from Mexico. Ask if any of the children have visited countries in the Americas.
3. Have the persons who have prepared the stories read them. Ask children to find the countries represented on the map. After each monologue, ask someone to pray for the prayer needs mentioned.
4. Review: Write the following words on a poster or whiteboard, and

have the children identify which story they belong with. Some words might belong with more than one story.

river
large city
alcohol
Bible stories
good grades
Quechua
sheep
UPG
Catholic Church
private school
medicine man

As you review the stories, talk about the needs of children in the Americas.

5. Closing: Give each child a card with a prayer request to take home. If time permits, have the children read their request aloud. Ask children continue praying for the request they received. Have a closing prayer for the children of South America.



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Story: Xiti

Xiti (Zee-tee) lives in a village on one of the smaller rivers that leads to the Amazon River in Brazil. He attends a very small school where he learns Portuguese; the people in his village speak another language as well. Once he was bitten by a snake that got into his boat from the river. It took a long time to heal because the local medicine man in his village did not like the way the doctors at the clinic treated him and kept putting plants and other things on the wound.

About once a month, some people from another village come up the river and gather people together to tell Bible stories. These people have been trained by some of our Baptist missionaries to tell the stories chronologically (in the order they occurred). Some of the adults in Xiti's village do not know how to read, so the stories are the best way they can learn. The stories are told in the dialect the people speak. Xiti loves the stories about the creation and the flood. The stories about sin and the problems it has caused in the world make him sad. He likes the stories about Jesus and all the things He did for people. It is hard for him to understand that Jesus would die on the cross for someone else. Xiti is fortunate that the Good News of Jesus has come to his village. There are more than 100 UPGs (Unreached People Groups) in Brazil.

Pray:

1. That the government will allow missionaries to go to Amazon River villages to share about Jesus.
2. For more of the native people to be trained in telling Bible stories and for protection for them as they travel.
3. For Xiti and many more like him to keep listening to the stories and to understand that Jesus died for them and to believe in Him as their Savior. Pray that he and his friends will tell the stories to others.

Story: Mario

Mario lives outside a small mountain town in Peru. He belongs to the Quechua (keh-choo-wah) tribe, descendants of the ancient Incas. He and his family speak Quechua as well as Spanish. Life is hard in his town. Many times the crops do not do well because of lack of rain, and animals die in the drought. Once in a while when the rains do come, they come too quickly, and wash away the good soil from the sides of the hills. Mario's father is a shepherd. In the summer months he takes the sheep farther up the mountains to find grass and is often away from home for weeks at a time. Mario looks forward to the day that he can go with his father during the summer. There is not much to do in the town. Men who are without work often gather in the "cantina" to drink. Alcoholism is a big problem that affects almost every family in town. Many young people who have the opportunity to leave the small town go to larger cities to live and work.

Mario walks about 30 minutes to get to the small school he attends. In the winter, he sometimes walks through snow. The only church in town is a small Catholic Church. Many people have more superstitious beliefs than true beliefs about Jesus. Mario does not have a Bible. Last summer some young people came from another town and had Vacation Bible School for the children. Mario and his friends enjoyed the games and Bible stories, and of course, the refreshments.

Pray:

1. That a church will be started in Mario's village, and that he and his friends will be able to attend.
2. That adults will trust Jesus and leave their alcohol habits.
3. For more pastors and Christian leaders among the Quechua people.

Story: Marcela

Marcela lives in Santiago, Chile, a city of 6 million people. She is from a well-to-do family and attends a private school. She plays tennis on the school's team and belongs to several clubs. Although she is only 11, she knows girls who have already started smoking and drinking. More than anything, she wants to fit in with her group. Very soon she will start going to late night weekend parties where drugs and alcohol will be present.

There is a lot of competition at Marcela's school. Her parents insist that she must make good grades in order to get into one of the best universities. Although she is young, Marcela feels a lot of pressure to live up to her parents' expectations.

Marcela was baptized as a baby into the Catholic Church, but her family only attends church on special occasions. She doesn't see that faith means anything to her parents although she often hears her grandmother say, "Si Dios quiere" (if God wills). Marcela's mother attends yoga classes and often goes to have tarot cards read. There is a Bible somewhere in the house, but no one ever reads it. Marcela doesn't have any idea that God loves her and wants to have any part in her life.

Pray:

1. That Marcela will meet a Christian friend at school and will realize that there are more important things than fitting in with a group.
2. Pray that Marcela and thousands like her will hear the message of God's love in a meaningful way.
3. Pray for churches to be started in the upper middle class areas of Santiago and other large cities of South America.