

NORTH AMERICAN MISSION STUDY FOR CHILDREN

United: Called to Be One

"If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" (Philippians 2:1-2, CSB).

Study Overview

The theme for the 2023 Week of Prayer for North American Missions is "United: Called to Be One." The focal Scripture verses are Philippians 2:1-2, where Paul is addressing the new church in Philippi. He is encouraging them to work together in spiritual unity toward the same goal of loving people and introducing them to Christ.

Our gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® provide the funds missionaries need as they train and serve all over North America. We are working in spiritual unity with missionaries across North America when we support them through prayer and giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Through this mission study, children will learn how church planter Vergil Brown, his wife, Kelsey and their four children work together on mission in Portland, Oregon. They will learn how important it is to give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and to pray for all missionaries serving in North America.

Prepare for the Study

- For overall promotion of the North American Missions Emphasis to your entire church, order the free North American Missions Emphasis print resources, including the theme poster, Annie Armstrong Easter Offering envelopes, prayer guides and promotion guides from your state convention office. Ordering information can be found at AnnieArmstrong.com/stateconventions.
- Work with missions leaders and other church leaders to plan aspects of the study, such as scheduling, scope and promotion. Encourage these leaders to enlist other church members to take ownership by helping in the planning and implementation of the study. You may choose to do the study as a special event or incorporate it into an existing meeting or group setting.
- Publicize the study through church bulletins, social media, churchwide announcements, newsletters and so forth.
- Ask Sunday School classes and church members to pray for the study outcome. Pray individuals will be inspired as they learn about missions efforts in North America and will eagerly support those who are serving as missionaries and church planters with the North American Mission Board (NAMB).
- Consider enlisting an outside speaker, such as a North American missionary, to address the church before beginning the study or as part of it.
- Explore the website, AnnieArmstrong.com/resources, for resources that will enhance the learning experience for your church.

- Download the study materials and video segment, “Making a Move,” from the website, AnnieArmstrong.com.
- Other segments found online can be used for anytime study purposes or for the Week of Prayer and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering emphases. The video segment for children features Vergil and Kelsey Brown in Portland, Oregon.
- Order or download and print enough 2023 *Week of Prayer* bookmarks and prayer guides for each participant or family to have one of each. Bookmarks can be ordered from NAMB at AnnieArmstrong.com/resources.

Note: You can download videos and other resources at AnnieArmstrong.com. Downloads are free. To order DVDs free of charge, call 1-800-634-2462 or email AAEO@namb.net. You can also check out NAMB's Facebook page at facebook.com/aaeo.sbc

Prepare for the Lesson

- Ensure you are equipped to show the featured video and that you have previewed it with the equipment and in the setting in which you will be showing it. If you don't have a way to show the video, you can tell the children about the missionaries in the story provided in the lesson plan.
- Read through the lesson plan and become familiar with it.
- Acquire a map of North America. Display it in a prominent place. Note the location of Portland, Oregon, from where you are located.
- Write Philippians 2:1-2 on a whiteboard or on posterboard.
- Decorate the room with missions items to enhance the learning experience.
- Make a copy of the word search activities at the back of the lesson plan for each child.
- Provide a pencil for each child.
- Make one copy of each word search solution for yourself.
- Purchase a small jigsaw puzzle of 20 or so pieces. Assemble before class only the outside pieces. Children will fill in the rest as part of the lesson.
- Have a printed Bible or a Bible app handy.
- Acquire a sheet of paper, a marker, a pair of scissors and two cups, baskets or jars.

Arrival

As the children arrive, allow them to work one of the word search activities found at the back of the lesson. Help those who need it.

Welcome (5-10 minutes)

After all the children have arrived, welcome them to the mission study. Introduce yourself and your helpers. Tell them they will be learning to pray for and help missionaries who are serving in North America. Show them on the map that North America includes the United States and Canada, as well as the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

During the Week of Prayer for North American Missions, we pray for missionaries, and we collect an offering for them named the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

If you would like to share more about who Annie was and why the offering is named after her, go to AnnieArmstrong.com/who-is-annie. There you will find lots of information and even a video.

Explain to the children that they will be focusing on missionaries Vergil and Kelsey Brown who live and serve in Portland, Oregon.

Show them where Portland is on the map of the United States and note where your church is located to help the kids gain context.

Explain that the theme for the mission study is “United: Called to Be One.” Read the Bible verse Philippians 2:1-2 from the poster or whiteboard. Explain that God wants Christians to work together to bring people to Christ.

As a church planting family, Vergil, Kelsey, and their four children, Lincoln, Olive, Coco and Georgia are working together to plant Redemption Church to bring the people living in northeast Portland to Christ.

Transition to the video/story.

Children’s Video/Story and Discussion (15–20 minutes)

Items needed:

- ☐ Small jigsaw puzzle (20 pieces or so)
- ☐ Marker or pen
- ☐ Whiteboard or poster

Learning Goal

Children will learn that when we are obedient to what God is telling us to do, He provides for our needs and often gives us back better than the things we might have given up to be obedient to Him. They will learn that much is accomplished and God is glorified when His people are walking in unity with Him and with each other.

They will also learn that many people are needed to plant a church. There are many things to do, and if even one person isn’t helping, the picture is not complete. As one part of a whole, we each have something we can and need to contribute.

Before the Lesson

Before the children arrive, put the four outside edges of the puzzle together, like a frame. Leave the inside incomplete. Using the marker or pen, write numbers or letters on the back of each remaining piece to correspond to the jobs named below that help make a church plant successful in bringing people to Jesus. Some jobs require several people, so write those on more than one puzzle piece. Below are some suggestions to reference in the lesson. Add more as you like. Write the jobs on the whiteboard or poster. Set the puzzle pieces to the side.

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| A. Preacher | G. Greeters |
| B. Worship leader | H. Missions |
| C. Musicians | I. VBS leader |
| D. Nursery workers | J. Cook church meals |
| E. Sunday School teachers | K. Run sound and live stream |
| F. Outreach persons | L. Visit sick people |

Lesson

Explain to the children that when God called Vergil Brown to plant a new church, he told his wife, Kelsey, and they prayed together about it because planting a new church meant they would have to move. They and their children would have to leave their old church, friends and school and start over in a new place where they didn't know anyone.

Ask the kids if they have ever had to move to a new place. To those who say they have, ask how they felt about that. Were they sad, nervous, scared or maybe even mad? Did they have a cooperative attitude, or did they pout and make the situation difficult? Did they even refuse to help?

Let's see how the Brown kids reacted when their mom and dad told them they would have to move.

Show the video or read the story below.

Life was good and the Brown kids were happy and content living in Gresham, which is a suburb just east of the big city of Portland, Oregon. They had friends, liked their school and loved their church, Gresham Bible Church. Their dad, Vergil, had planted that church and pastored it for 12 years. The thought of leaving never crossed their minds.

Then one day, the kids' dad and their mom, Kelsey, made a surprising announcement. God had made clear to them that there were other communities in Portland who needed a new and healthy church. He told them that they were to move to the northeast side of Portland to plant such a church. Vergil and Kelsey felt it was important for the kids to see that when God asks you to go, you go.

Though Lincoln, Olive, Coco and Georgia were sad to leave their old friends, they trusted their parents, and they trusted God. And so, the family moved and started Redemption Church in a new neighborhood where they didn't know anyone. They moved to a place where few people had a close relationship with a Christian, where few had ever attended a church service, and where few personally knew a pastor and his family.

Right away the kids felt welcomed. Some of the kids in their new neighborhood had written the word *WELCOME* in chalk on the sidewalk in front of their house. The kids soon found more friends in this new neighborhood than there were in their old. There are always neighborhood kids over at the Brown house.

And the funny thing is that people are very curious about Jesus and the Bible. The Browns are able to teach them and answer their questions. Olive even gave Bibles to her new friends and started a Bible study with them.

And the whole family pitched in to get their new church, Redemption Church, up and running. They worked together in unity to tackle the many jobs involved in planting a new church. And the more they kept at it, the more they saw God answer their prayers.

Vergil says, “Kelsey and the kids play important roles in the life and ministry of our church. We are partners in the work. Kelsey is a greeter and works in the women’s ministry. The kids put out signs on Sundays and work the sound board and live streaming. They volunteer in the nursery. It’s all hands on-deck for the Brown family in this church plant.”

We are also part of God’s ministry in Portland when we give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and pray for the Brown family. We are all important pieces in God’s plan for the world and for His Church.

Transition to the puzzle demonstration.

Show the children the incomplete puzzle. Tell them to pretend the puzzle is a church. Ask them if they think the church needs some helpers to make it complete.

Distribute all except one of the puzzle pieces among the children. Set the one piece aside. Call out the letters or numbers on the backs of the puzzle pieces, name the role needed from your list (except the piece you reserved) and ask the children to come up a few at a time and fit in their puzzle pieces as you call them. The puzzle will be missing your piece.

Tell the children that their “church” is nearly fully functioning, but someone is holding out and not doing their part. Emphasize how important it is in churches, families, sports teams and anywhere people are supposed to be working together that everyone does his or her part. We are all parts of a whole.

Bring out the missing puzzle piece, name the job on it and pop it into place. Show the kids the “whole” puzzle. God is happy and the church operates well when Christians work together in unity. And when we are obedient to what He tells us to do, even when it is hard, He will provide in miraculous ways and often give us better than what we had before.

Though Lincoln, Olive, Coco and Georgia hated to leave behind their old friends, God gave them many more new friends and even provided a new church building in which they could meet. They got to see God provide and learned to trust Him no matter what. They learned that even kids are important to God and can serve Him in bringing many people into His kingdom. Every person is an important piece in God’s puzzle.

Make sure the children understand what they have just heard. When God’s people work together toward the main goal of helping people have a relationship with Jesus, then they will tell more people and they in turn will tell more people. We can do that better when we offer the special talents God has given each of us and work together in unity.

Transition to the Bible lesson, “One Body, Many Parts.”

Bible Lesson (15 minutes)

One Body, Many Parts (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

Items needed:

- ☐ Bible or Bible app
- ☐ Marker or pen
- ☐ 20 strips of paper
- ☐ 2 baskets, cups or jars

Learning Goal

Children will learn from the Bible that a church functions much like the human body and much like a sports team.

Before the Lesson

Cut a sheet of paper into 20 strips. On 10 strips of paper, write the word *pitcher*. Fold the strips and put them in a cup, basket or jar. On the remaining 10, write the words *pitcher, catcher, first baseman, second baseman, third baseman, shortstop, left fielder, center fielder, right fielder and batter*. Fold the strips and place them in the second cup, basket or jar.

Create a pretend baseball diamond, using whatever is handy to designate bases and a pitcher's mound.

***Note:** If you have time after the prayer activity and have enough kids, you may opt to play a quick game of baseball or kickball. Kickball is popular among kids living in Portland. If so, gather the equipment needed to play.

Lesson

In 1 Corinthians 12:12-27, the apostle Paul is encouraging members of the new church in Corinth. The new church was made of people from all walks of life who were very different from each other. Paul was encouraging them to work together in unity despite their differences. He was also letting them know that every member of the church body is equally important in carrying out God's mission of bringing people into His kingdom.

Read the verses from either a printed copy of the Bible or a Bible app. You may choose to read from a version of the Bible that is easy for children to understand.

Ask the children if they could function as well if they didn't have eyes, ears, hands or feet. Just as our bodies work best if we have all those body parts functioning well, the body of Christ—Jesus' Church—works best when we are all doing our parts.

Ask the kids if they have ever played baseball or softball. Ask them which position they think is most important. They can choose only one.

Have them come forward and draw a strip of paper from the basket that holds the slips all labeled *pitcher*. Kids should keep secret what is written on their papers.

Ask the kids to take their positions on the “field” according to the position named on their strip of paper. Of course, they will all go to the pitcher’s mound.

Ask them if they think every player on the team being a pitcher will work. Will they win any games? Will they even be able to play? Ask them what else is needed for the team to function well.

Call them all back to you and have them draw strips of paper from the second basket and again take their positions. If any strips of paper (positions) are left in the basket, place them in the correct spot on the “field.”

Ask if this new team will work better. Yes! Reinforce that God has given each person special gifts, talents and interests, and none is better than the others. All are needed to help a church be healthy and to function well.

Ask the kids to brainstorm some things they can do to help in your church. Encourage them by saying no one is too young to play an important part in the church. God gave us all talents and interests we can use to help people learn about Jesus.

Transition to the prayer activity.

Prayer Activity (5-10 minutes)

Remind the children that it is important to pray for our missionaries in North America. Using the prayer guide you downloaded or ordered from the website, read the missionary prayer requests one at a time, inviting the children to pray aloud for each missionary couple’s requests.

If the children don’t wish to pray aloud, they can pray silently. Distribute the bookmarks to remind the children to pray for missionaries often.

Invite the children to also pray that many people will give to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering so missionaries will have what they need to bring many people to Jesus. Encourage the children to give as well. Have offering envelopes handy.

Giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering helps missionaries who have limited resources do more. It allows them to impact their communities more effectively.

Closing

While the children wait for their parents, they may either work on the jigsaw puzzle or word searches some more. Or, if time allows and you can go outside, play a quick game of baseball or kickball.

You can also offer a snack at this time.

AAEO WORD SEARCH

The Annie Armstrong Easter Offering helps missionaries in North America share the gospel of Jesus Christ in North America. Find and circle the words from the word bank below and then pray that God will bless and multiply the gifts given to the offering.

X	O	F	F	E	R	I	N	G	G	R	P	I	M
H	M	N	U	P	C	T	P	X	M	O	F	I	I
D	R	G	O	S	P	E	L	J	E	S	U	S	S
O	N	C	H	U	R	C	H	M	I	W	T	U	S
K	M	I	J	C	S	I	Y	I	A	X	O	R	I
N	O	R	T	H	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	U	O
P	R	A	Y	E	R	J	U	O	L	M	V	E	N
E	Q	K	C	S	Z	F	A	O	L	O	Q	R	S
X	X	O	C	P	B	W	C	C	W	V	A	F	C
M	B	H	O	P	T	B	I	B	L	E	G	Q	H
X	U	S	S	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	A	R	Y
A	N	N	I	E	A	R	M	S	T	R	O	N	G
X	V	S	O	E	T	S	W	D	E	D	E	P	B
L	Y	F	S	G	Z	Y	Q	D	K	O	R	L	Y

Word Bank

Annie Armstrong

Bible

Church

Gospel

Jesus

Missionary

Missions

North America

Offering

Prayer

AAEO Word Search Solution

X	O	F	F	E	R	I	N	G	G	R	P	I	M
H	M	N	U	P	C	T	P	X	M	O	F	I	I
D	R	G	O	S	P	E	L	J	E	S	U	S	S
O	N	C	H	U	R	C	H	M	I	W	T	U	S
K	M	I	J	C	S	I	Y	I	A	X	O	R	I
N	O	R	T	H	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	U	O
P	R	A	Y	E	R	J	U	O	L	M	V	E	N
E	Q	K	C	S	Z	F	A	O	L	O	Q	R	S
X	X	O	C	P	B	W	C	C	W	V	A	F	C
M	B	H	O	P	T	B	I	B	L	E	G	Q	H
X	U	S	S	M	I	S	S	I	O	N	A	R	Y
A	N	N	I	E	A	R	M	S	T	R	O	N	G
X	V	S	O	E	T	S	W	D	E	D	E	P	B
L	Y	F	S	G	Z	Y	Q	D	K	O	R	L	Y

UNITY WORD SEARCH

Jesus is happy when all His followers work together in unity and harmony. When we work and give together as a team, we can better accomplish the goal of helping people become followers of Christ and be saved. Working with partners helps us have success.

Find the words from the word bank hidden in the word search below. Work with a partner to solve the puzzle faster.

J	H	U	G	H	A	P	P	Y	X	G	O	A	L	W
V	F	P	R	T	H	M	D	S	G	G	C	G	I	N
D	X	A	Y	W	J	N	O	U	O	S	A	E	B	B
A	J	U	A	E	X	G	L	E	C	D	A	R	U	R
M	S	Q	S	Q	I	D	J	W	F	J	T	V	G	B
I	H	U	J	B	R	O	F	L	C	I	L	G	E	D
Y	S	H	A	R	M	O	N	Y	V	I	B	T	I	D
E	E	A	U	E	W	S	W	Q	B	Q	D	T	Y	B
T	W	X	D	O	U	U	B	L	D	O	G	P	K	J
F	K	F	R	C	D	U	N	I	T	Y	A	N	N	E
O	L	K	C	B	V	H	M	F	D	R	B	G	M	O
H	H	E	J	J	T	E	A	M	T	L	F	I	B	R
N	S	Y	I	E	P	X	P	N	K	X	L	V	K	W
S	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R	D	P	P	E	K	O
R	B	P	Q	P	W	R	J	P	A	X	C	A	V	X

Word Bank

Team
Unity
Together
Harmony

Work
Give
Goal
Jesus

Saved
Happy
Success
Partner

Unity Word Search Solution

J	H	U	G	H	A	P	P	Y	X	G	O	A	L	W
V	F	P	R	T	H	M	D	S	G	G	C	G	I	N
D	X	A	Y	W	J	N	O	U	O	S	A	E	B	B
A	J	U	A	E	X	G	L	E	C	D	A	R	U	R
M	S	Q	S	Q	I	D	J	W	F	J	T	V	G	B
I	H	U	J	B	R	O	F	L	C	I	L	G	E	D
Y	S	H	A	R	M	O	N	Y	V	I	B	T	I	D
E	E	A	U	E	W	S	W	Q	B	Q	D	T	Y	B
T	W	X	D	O	U	U	B	L	D	O	G	P	K	J
F	K	F	R	C	D	U	N	I	T	Y	A	N	N	E
O	L	K	C	B	V	H	M	F	D	R	B	G	M	O
H	H	E	J	J	T	E	A	M	T	L	F	I	B	R
N	S	Y	I	E	P	X	P	N	K	X	L	V	K	W
S	T	O	G	E	T	H	E	R	D	P	P	E	K	O
R	B	P	Q	P	W	R	J	P	A	X	C	A	V	X