

Quick Reference

HCA

Program Guide

Advent | Christmas

Kenya | 2011

Kenya at a Glance

Kenya, located in East Africa, is known for its scenic landscapes, vast wildlife preserves and interesting cultures, including the Maasai. The country is bordered to the north by South Sudan and Ethiopia, to the east by Somalia and the Indian Ocean, to the south by Tanzania, and to the west by Lake Victoria and Uganda. Kenya's capital city is Nairobi – a sprawling city of contrasts, where modern skyscrapers look out over vast shantytowns and tent cities housing the poor.

In 2011, Kenya also became the site of the world's largest refugee camp, Dadaab, home to thousands of East Africans – mostly Somalis – who have fled their homes in search of food and water. The severe drought affecting East Africa is believed to be one of the worst in more than six decades.

“On the ground” in this crisis, offering concrete help and the Lord's compassion are local church personnel – many Holy Childhood Association Coordinators in Kenyan dioceses. They continue their regular service in schools and parishes, as well as at child care and nutrition centers, and orphanages, while “working overtime” to reach out in the crisis. Exemplifying Kenya's motto of national solidarity – “Harambee,” a Swahili term that means “pulling together” – these priests, religious and laity provide compassionate care to all who are suffering.

As you celebrate the work of the life-giving service of the Church in the Missions this Advent and Christmas, we remind you to “pull together” – with daily prayer and generous sacrifice – for all children of the world who are in need of experiencing the joy of the “Good News” of Jesus.

To learn more about work of the local church in East Africa during this time of crisis, visit our website at www.onefamilyinmission.org.



Caption: A Church-sponsored feeding program in the diocese of Lodwar, Kenya.

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The Pontifical Mission Societies of the United States

How Does HCA Support Kids in Kenya?

Last year, 25 dioceses in Kenya, including some of those hardest hit by the current drought / famine, received support from the Holy Childhood Association. Contributions *from your students* – combined with contributions from children all over the world – *helped*:

- Homes for disabled children and the Angel Day Care Center in the Diocese of Eldoret (\$11,000)
- An education program for deaf children in the Diocese of Embu (\$3,200)
- A medical clinic in the Diocese of Garissa (\$7,000)
- A nutrition program at St. Francis of Assisi Parish in the Diocese of Homa Bay (\$5,000)

And much, much more....

A Prayer for the Missions at Christmas

Dear God,

As we celebrate the joy of Jesus' birth, we pray for children who are poor, hungry and in need. May they experience Christ's love and peace through the work of missionaries. We remember especially the children of Kenya and East Africa who now suffer from drought and famine, and those who care for them. May they all find strength and encouragement in the "Good News" of the birth of Jesus. Amen.

Activities

Bearing Gifts for the Missions

+ Grades K-4

+ Matthew 2:1-12

+ Yellow construction paper (or tin foil), string, baby doll, empty shoe boxes (children may bring these to class one to two weeks in advance), Christmas wrapping paper, bows, crayons, looseleaf paper (pre-cut into strips), pens or pencils, scissors.

Prepare: Cut a large star shape from yellow construction paper or tin foil, and hang it in your classroom. Place a baby doll underneath the star to represent the infant Jesus.

Do: At the beginning of class, have students write down on the pre-cut strips of looseleaf paper things they will do for Jesus to help spread the "Good News" and show that they are missionaries (for example, pray, volunteer, help out at home, be kind to a classmate, go to Mass regularly, etc.). Have students place these paper strips into their shoeboxes, and wrap them using the Christmas wrapping paper. (If wrapping is too difficult for younger children, have them decorate the boxes with bows and colorful drawings.)

Read Matthew 2:1-12 to students and then act out the passage. Guide students around the room carrying their "gifts" for Jesus. Ask them to tell you how they know which way to go – *follow the star just like the Magi!* As they leave their gifts for Jesus, encourage students to share aloud what they gave, and how they plan to share them with Him at Christmas and throughout the year.

Put It to the Panel

+ Grades 5-8

Work with your local Holy Childhood Association Coordinator to set up a panel of missionaries and / or young people from your parish / diocese who have participated in short-term mission trips. Ask members of the panel to speak to your students for a brief time about their experiences; then have a question-and-answer session. Prepare a few questions ahead of time in case students are shy or have a hard time getting started.

"Meatless Mondays"

+ All Grades (at home)

Encourage students and their families to join in solidarity with the people of East Africa currently suffering from severe drought / famine (learn more at www.onefamilyinmission.org). Suggest that families eat one inexpensive meal, such as rice and beans, each week, perhaps on a Monday. Monies saved can be a family's gift to the Holy Childhood Association, standing in solidarity with the poor of the Missions.