

September 2011

Ideas, Activities & Events

- *Do you have your HCA Resource Guide? If not, call 1-800-431-2222 to request a copy.*
- *Place your order for HCA Advent / Christmas materials by September 16.*
- **Bible Shuffle.** Write a well-known mission verse from the Bible—perhaps the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28:19-20). Write each word of the verse on a separate large index card. Distribute one card to each student, and see how fast the group can put the phrase in the correct order. Visit MissionInScripture.org to see how mission is found in the message for each Sunday.
- **Caring Chain.** Make a chain using strips of paper. Cut strips of white or colored paper about one-inch wide by 8 1/2 inches long. Ask each child to write down a way they were caring on one side of their strip, and their name on the other side. Form the strips into loops to make a chain. Decorate your classroom or the parish church with these “caring chains.”
- **Acrostics.** Take a mission-related word and, using each letter individually, try to find other words that relate to that original word. For example:
R - restless
E - empty
F - frightened
U - urgent
G - going
E - exhausted
E - exile
S - seeking
- **You CAN Make a Difference.** Place a coffee can or empty jar in on your desk where students can deposit loose change. Empty the jar at the end of each month and send the money to HCA for kids in the Missions.
- **Sacrifice a Song.** Suggest to children who own portable media devices to put aside \$1 (average cost to download a song), and send that savings to HCA.

Holy Childhood Association

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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

October 2011

Ideas, Activities & Events

- October 1**—Feast of **St. Thérèse of Lisieux**, co-patron of the Missions with St. Francis Xavier. Download FREE student handouts at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- October 7**—**HCA Day!** Also, gather for [Worldwide Children's Eucharistic Holy Hour](#), co-sponsored by HCA, and broadcast live on [EWTN](#) at 10 a.m. EDT.
- October 22**—**Blessed John Paul II**. Download FREE student handouts at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- October 23**—**World Mission Sunday**. Plan a multi-cultural celebration in your school or parish! Download FREE activity sheets at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- During **October**—**Mission Month**—pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary everyday for children in the Missions. Learn more at www.HCAKids.org.
- Mission Haiku**. Haiku is a form of Japanese poetry. Ask children to compose a Haiku related to the Church's mission of helping children around the world. There are three lines in a Haiku poem as follows:

line one/five syllables *A child is hungry*
 line two/seven syllables *a cup of milk and some bread*
 line three/five syllables *no more tears, a smile*
- Scrapbook Survey**. Have students “discover” a mission country by collecting material about the history, geography and customs of that place. Use mission magazines—like [MISSION \(available to download online\)](#)—to find out more about the Church in those countries. You can also learn more online at www.HCAKids.org.

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November 2011

Ideas, Activities & Events

- *Place your order for HCA Lent / Easter Program materials by November 14.*
- *Don't forget to enter the HCA Christmas Artwork Contest. Visit www.HCAKids.org for more information.*
- **November 1**—Feast of **All Saints**. Be inspired by the lives of some “missionary” saints—St. Francis Xavier, St. Thérèse of Lisieux.
- During this season of “giving thanks”—**Thanksgiving is November 24**—ask children to write thank-you notes to missionaries from their (arch)diocese who have served or are serving overseas. Contact your local mission office for more information.



- *Did you know that through your prayers and support of the Holy Childhood Association, you are sharing your faith—and love—with millions of children around the world?* In Senegal, for example, your contributions provide help for the St. Joan of Arc Center for children with mental and physical disabilities (*photo above*). Please continue to pray for the children at this center – and know that they are praying, in thanksgiving, for each of you!

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December 2011

Ideas, Activities & Events

- **December 3**—Feast of **St. Francis Xavier**, co-patron of the Missions with St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Download FREE student handouts at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- *Don't forget! The deadline for entering the HCA Christmas Artwork Contest is January 31, 2012. Find more information at www.HCAKids.org.*

The Legend of the Poinsettia

The legend of the poinsettia comes from Mexico. It tells of two poor children—Maria and her little brother



Pablo—who always looked forward to the Christmas festival. + Each year a large manger scene was set up in the village church, and the days before Christmas were filled with parades and parties. Although they loved Christmas, the children were sad because they had no money to buy presents. They especially wished that they could give some-

thing to the church for the Baby Jesus. + One Christmas Eve, Maria and Pablo set out for their parish church. On their way they picked some weeds growing along the roadside and decided to take them as their gift to the Baby Jesus in the manger scene. Teased by other children, they said nothing, knowing they had given what they could. The two also placed green plants around the manger and, miraculously, the tops of the green leaves turned into bright red petals. Soon the manger was surrounded by beautiful star-like flowers—poinsettias!

For Discussion:

- + What gifts do you give to Jesus every day?
- + Why do you think Jesus wants you to share your gift of faith with children in the Missions?

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January 2012

Ideas, Activities & Events

- **January 1**—The Catholic Church celebrates the **World Day of Peace**.
[Read the Holy Father's Message](#).
Download FREE student handouts at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- **January 6**—Feast of the **Epiphany**.
Download a FREE "**Epiphany Prayer Service**" at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/hca-reproducibles.html.
- **Peaceful News**. Bring in a copy of any daily newspaper. If the group is large, bring in several papers and/or news magazines, making sure that there is enough current events material to allow each student access. (If the group is large, you might decide to break students into smaller groups of 3 to 5 people.)

Ask students to search the newspapers / magazines for stories about events that would be "anti-peace." Cut out the articles and headlines and tape them to the classroom wall. Encourage discussion about any of the stories as they are added to the wall. Contrast the common greeting of Jesus to His followers—"Peace be with you!"—when discussing the events / circumstances in the news reports.

Now ask students to imagine that it is a new year in the future, and the world is at peace. Review again the stories and headlines. As a group, "rewrite" the headlines for this new "world of peace." For example, a headline that reads *Three Seized in Drug Raid* might be rewritten to read, *Illegal Drugs Eliminated from Our Town*. Another example: *Man Arrested for Beating Someone* might read *Man Honored for Being a Good Samaritan*.

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February 2012

Ideas, Activities & Events

- **February 22—Ash Wednesday**, Lent begins. What sacrifices will you make this Lent? Maybe you can remember the children of the Missions through HCA (www.HCAKids.org)!
- **Great Resource**—www.catholicmom.com/catholic_kids.htm.
- **The Parable of the Good Samaritan.** Write the word “love” on the board (or a piece of paper, large enough to display). Ask the children to close their eyes and picture someone they love. Then, take volunteer answers about who those people are—and why. Restate the children’s answers into statements about what makes us love certain people: *I love my mom because she’s kind; we should love people for their kindness.* Next, read a story from the Bible (**Luke 10:25-37**) that explains why we should love all people—even ones we may not “like” very much or other people we don’t even know. Now ask children to think of the world as their “neighborhood”—and about all the people to love in it! Brainstorm on ways they can show their “neighbors” around the world that they love them.
- **Scriptural Valentines.** Ask children to design and decorate Valentine’s Day cards for friends, family and senior citizens in your parish featuring Scripture passages related to love (see Scripture suggestions below). Discuss how doing this makes them like missionaries—bringing God’s love to others!

Scripture suggestions: 1 John 4:7-8, John 13:34, John 15:12, 1 John 3:23, Matthew 22:37, 1 John 4:16-19, 1 John 4:19-21, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, 1 Thessalonians 4:9, Colossians 3:14, 1 Thessalonians 3:12, Romans 12:9

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March 2012

Ideas, Activities & Events

- March 11-18—HCA’s National Prayer Week.**
 Pray with children across the United States a special HCA mission prayer; visit www.HCAKids.org.
- March 17—Feast of St. Patrick.**
 Pray for the intercession of the missionary St. Patrick on behalf of missionaries today.
- Crown of Thorns Bread.** (*This is a great activity for younger children, helping them to understand corporal and spiritual acts of mercy.*) Braid frozen bread dough (the kind sold in tubes in the dairy section of most supermarkets) and form a circle; make sure the ends are pressed firmly together. Insert toothpicks into the bread so that it resembles a crown of thorns (be careful that you do not insert them too deep, or when the bread bakes / rises, they won’t be visible). Bake and cool the bread, then bring it to class.

Discuss what the bread represents—the Crown of Thorns. As they perform corporal acts of mercy (volunteer in a shelter, help an elderly person in the neighborhood) and spiritual acts of mercy (pray for a sick person, forgive someone), they will be allowed to pull a “thorn” out of Jesus’ Crown and place it in a jar. Encourage students to be the bearer of “Good News”—telling what their friends have done. Send a note home to parents as well.

Remind children that when they perform acts of mercy they are being faithful to Jesus’ teaching—and when they do the opposite, they “wound” Him. Challenge the children to remove all the thorns by the end of Lent—**and remember that prayer is a spiritual act of mercy, so daily prayer for children in the Missions and missionaries counts!** At the end of Lent, count the “thorns” in the jar and assign a monetary value to each; donate that money to HCA!

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April 2012

Ideas, Activities & Events

- **April 8—Easter Sunday!**

Remember especially those waiting to hear the “Good News” of the Risen Lord! Download FREE prayer services and other materials at www.onefamilyinmission.org/hca/lent.html.

- **Violence and the Passion of Christ.** The news, video games, television and movies are often filled with violence, as are some neighborhoods—and the story of Jesus’ Passion and Death on the Cross. So how does the message of Holy Week play to young minds that, many experts say, may have become desensitized to violence? Interview “tweens” and teenagers about their impressions of our Lord’s suffering and death. Discuss how very real (as opposed to television / video game violence) and brutal the Crucifixion was. Talk about Jesus’ great sacrifice—His dying for each one of us.

In the Missions...

Christians in Nepal have had freedom to practice their faith only since 1991, when a new constitution established religious freedom. Missionaries in Nepal now invite people to hear about Jesus and His “Good News.” They also serve the poor and suffering by providing them with medical care, education and job training.

Today, some 7,500 Catholics live in Nepal—less than one percent of the population.



With your help through HCA, hundreds more young people will learn about the Catholic faith every year, as they experience, through the work of missionaries, Jesus’ great love for us—the love that led Him to the Cross. (Above, Bishop Anthony Sharma of Nepal blesses a young girl.)

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29	30					

May 2012

Ideas, Activities & Events

- **Honoring Mom.** In one mission country, \$10 pays for three days of food for an expectant mother in a hospital. Encourage students to make a gift to HCA in honor of their mothers and for all mothers of the world. Pray a decade of the World Mission Rosary every week for mothers and their children in the Developing World.
- **Field of Daisies.** Spring is in the air! Pushing the “flower power” all around, have students create a field of daisies as a visual reminder of their support of the Missions through HCA. Every time a sacrifice is made, put a daisy on the bulletin board in the classroom—or have families do the activity, using the refrigerator as the “field” in the making!
- **Summer Pen Pals.** As young people prepare to say “goodbye” to another school year, ask them to **not** leave the Missions behind this summer. Suggest that each student write to an “imaginary” friend in a mission country. They could keep a journal as “pen pal” correspondence, writing about what fun things they’re doing—and how they’re not forgetting about their faith and their special “job” of being a missionary, in prayer especially, every day, summer or not! Students might even start a separate journal for imagining what their mission “pen pal” would write back, drawing on what they learned about the Missions this past school year from HCA.

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27	28	29	30	31		