

Grades  
for  
**3-5**

HCA Mission News

**Focus: Vietnam /  
Thailand**

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# It's OUR World

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## Happy for School!

In Vietnam, a country with limited religious freedom, about 200 children happily attend catechism class every Sunday afternoon at St. Therese's parish. They study a passage from one of the Gospels, and think about what Jesus was saying to them for their daily lives. Each student receives a religion workbook and a Bible that has been translated into the local language. The parish is able to provide these materials thanks to *you* and your gifts to the Holy Childhood Association.



Maria Pham Thi Nhuy is one of the "happy students" at St. Therese. She says: "I like coming to Sunday school because I want to learn more about how Jesus wants me to live my life. I like to study. One day I would very much like to become a nurse or a doctor. In this way I will be able to help others, especially the sick."



TOP Maria Pham Thi Nhuy  
RIGHT Translated Bible and  
catechism workbook

# Did You Know?

Only about six percent of the population of Vietnam is Catholic. The first missionaries to Vietnam came in the 1600s with French merchants who traveled there to set up trading posts.

## Mission Snapshot



While the number of Catholics in Vietnam is small, their faith is great! Many young Catholics have even answered the call to become priests and religious Sisters and Brothers. In one seminary, there is hardly enough room to house all the young men who want to become priests! Most come from a local community in the southern part of the country. In addition to the hours they spend studying Scripture and Catholic teaching, these young men are also responsible for taking care of a farm that supplies most of their food. *Do you feel the call to the priesthood or religious life? Talk about it!*




## Meet Father Dominic – The Cooking Monk!

For this issue of *It's Our World*, we asked a former HCA kid for a fun, family-friendly recipe with an Asian flair. And he delivered! Benedictine Father Dominic Garramone, host of the public television show, *Breaking Bread with Father Dominic*, shared with us his recipe for Thai Chicken Pizza.

"I remember selling Holy Childhood Association stamps at Christmas when I was in elementary school," Father Dominic told *It's Our World*. "The first year, I announced to my mother, 'I have to sell Holyhood stamps!' We always put them on our Christmas packages and cards, to help remind people of the real reason for Christmas — to honor and celebrate Jesus' birthday."

Ask Father Dominic why he became a priest, and he'll give you two reasons: his prayer-filled family life – and his love of cooking. "When I started thinking about ways I could serve God and the Church, I realized I wanted to live someplace where people all pitched in and helped each other, and where prayer was a part of daily life," he explained. "So after I finished college I joined a Benedictine monastery. Today I teach in our high school, sing and pray in our abbey church, and make pizza for my fellow monks!"

Father Dominic told us that he prays for the Missions every day – just like he did when he was an HCA kid!



Look for the pizza link on [www.hcakids.org](http://www.hcakids.org) to read Father Dominic's recipe for Thai Chicken Pizza.

# Old McDonald's Farm

## Has Nothing on Vietnam

Vietnam is a country located in Southeast Asia, directly below China. In fact, it looks like a 1,000-mile long letter "S"! Hot and humid are the two words that best describe the nation's climate.



For thousands of years, the people of Vietnam have lived and worked along the country's bountiful rivers. The Red, Ma and Mekong Rivers are some of the biggest in the country. The land surrounding these rivers is low and wet, offering an ideal place to grow rice – a staple crop in Vietnam.

Growing rice requires a great deal of hard work and patience – and water. On average, farmers need more than 500 gallons of water to produce two pounds of rice! It takes between three and six months for a rice plant to reach maturity.

The land on which rice plants are grown is called a rice paddy. Farming the wet and muddy rice paddies requires a lot of manual labor. Often, Vietnamese farmers will use animals to help in the work, such as Asian Water Buffalo. To see a clip of these animals in action, visit our HCA page on our website at [www.OneFamilyInMission.org](http://www.OneFamilyInMission.org). The animals are used to help plow the land. After land is plowed, rice seeds are carefully planted by hand, close together and in rows. A good rice planter can plant a paddy measuring 430 square yards with thousands of seeds!

In addition to farming for rice, the Vietnamese have also become proficient "fish farmers." The process of "farming" fish is called aquaculture. Some four million people are fish farmers in Vietnam. Shrimp is the nation's biggest export.

## Test Your Memory!

Now that you know a little bit more about life in rural Vietnam, it's time to test your memory about what you just read.

1. Vietnam is located in \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Name one of the biggest rivers in Vietnam. \_\_\_\_\_
3. If it takes 500 gallons of water to produce two pounds of rice, how much water would it take to produce one pound of rice? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What do Asian Water Buffalos do? \_\_\_\_\_



# Celebration Nations!

Just like we do here at home, our mission family in Thailand celebrates fun, colorful and lively holidays throughout the year. Below is a list of some Thai celebrations and the months in which they occur. Next to each, list and describe holidays and/or holy days celebrated in our country during these same months. Compare your answers with friends.

THAI HOLIDAY	MONTH CELEBRATED	HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?	AMERICAN HOLIDAY / HOLY DAY	HOW IS IT CELEBRATED?
Chiang Mai Flower Festival	February	The town of Chiang Mai celebrates its beautiful blooms with parades of flower floats and displays, marching bands and contests.		
Songkran (Thai New Year)	April	People throw and spray water at one another. This symbolizes the washing away of bad luck.		
Royal Plowing Ceremony	May	The King and Queen oversee the ceremony, which celebrates the beginning of the rice-planting season.		
Bun Bang Fai (Rocket Festival)	May	People fire homemade rockets into the sky, hoping that the rockets will bring rain for a good rice harvest.		
Loy Krathong (Candle Festival)	October or November	People place candles on bamboo boats and float them down a river. This is believed to carry away bad deeds.		



# Meet Koi!

Ten-year-old Koi attends one of three local Catholic schools in Chanthaburi in southern Thailand. Koi is the youngest of three children. Her mom and dad grow and sell corn.

While the region is filled with many natural treasures – waterfalls, gemstones, tropical fruit – families who live in remote areas of the province are very poor. Many times young children don't have enough food to eat.

Thanks to a donation of \$3,000 from children in the United States through the Holy Childhood Association, children like Koi receive two meals a day while they are in school. They also learn about the Catholic faith and are able to celebrate and give thanks to God for that faith by going to Mass.

Koi loves going to school and dreams of being a teacher someday. Like her friends, she plants vegetables in the school garden, cares for the smaller animals on the school farm, and helps to keep the classrooms clean.

## At A Glance

### Issues Facing Children in Thailand

- More than one million children are in need of special protection, including orphaned children, children affected by HIV/AIDS, street children, children with disabilities, and child laborers.
- An estimated one million children of primary school age either do not go to school or enroll years late.

### Issues Facing Children in Vietnam

- Almost half of the children in rural areas of Vietnam live in poverty.
- About a quarter of the children in Vietnam's cities live in poverty.
- Women and children are more likely to live in poverty and without basic services, such as healthcare.



A group of children enjoy their lunch. Boys and girls bring rice from home and receive vegetables and fish from school to make it a more healthy meal.



## Don't Forget!

A "great day" is coming this October! Tell your teacher, friends, pastor and family that World Mission Sunday will be celebrated on October 23 – a day for remembering that because we're baptized, we're missionaries! How great to be able to share our faith – by our prayers and sacrifices – with the whole world!

And since October is also a time to dedicate ourselves to praying the Rosary, you might want to think about praying the World Mission Rosary. Learn more at [www.hcakids.org](http://www.hcakids.org)!

## Pssst... Pass it On!

Let your parents or older siblings know that they can also receive news from the Missions – with a **FREE** subscription to **MISSION** magazine. They can visit [www.MISSIONmagazine.org](http://www.MISSIONmagazine.org) to learn more!

## A Prayer for Children in the Missions

Dear God,

Bless us as we start a new year at school. Help us to share our faith – Your gift to us – and our love with children in the Missions every day.

We pray for children in the Missions who cannot go to school, and those who are in great need in this very moment.

We pray for missionaries who share the "Good News" of Your Son, Jesus.

May children everywhere know how much You love them – and how much we love them by our prayers and sacrifices.

Amen.