

THE GUIDEBOOK FOR CHILDREN'S GOSPEL PARTIES



REACHING KIDS THROUGH KIDS

“JESUS SAID, ‘LET THE LITTLE CHILDREN COME TO ME, AND DO NOT HINDER THEM, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN BELONGS TO SUCH AS THESE.’ (MATTHEW 19:14)”

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 1
Before Undertaking the Program	Page 2
Step1 – Prayer	Page 4
Step 2 - Leadership Roles and Requirements	Page 6
Step 3 – Determine When and Where	Page 8
Step 4 – Gospel Party	Page 10
Next Steps	Page 24
MIS Discipleship Lessons	Page 25
Guidebook Supplement	Page 26

INTRODUCTION

This comprehensive guidebook is based on the model of evangelism and church planting developed by Lien Huu Co Doc (Christian Fellowship Church) in Vietnam over the past 25 years. This strategy focuses on reaching children through children in evangelistic parties that ultimately results in the planting of new churches. Christian children play the key role as they invite their non-believing friends to a party to learn about Jesus. Christian teenagers are also an important part of the program as they participate in the program itself and assist in leading children to Christ and later in the discipleship process.

The overall objective is to make disciples of Jesus Christ. The focus is on children, the most responsive segment of society. Over the years, it has been learned that a party that is fun and enjoyable is a most fruitful environment in which to share the Gospel with children. This attracts kids of all ages as well as parents who are very grateful that their kids are invited to something special and engaging.

This allows the Gospel to be shared in a very warm, family-oriented environment which is very conducive to the invitation to pray and accept Christ. Subsequently, a program of discipleship is initiated. The goal is to lead entire families to the Lord and then establish a cell group that will eventually become a new local church.



BEFORE UNDERTAKING THE PROGRAM

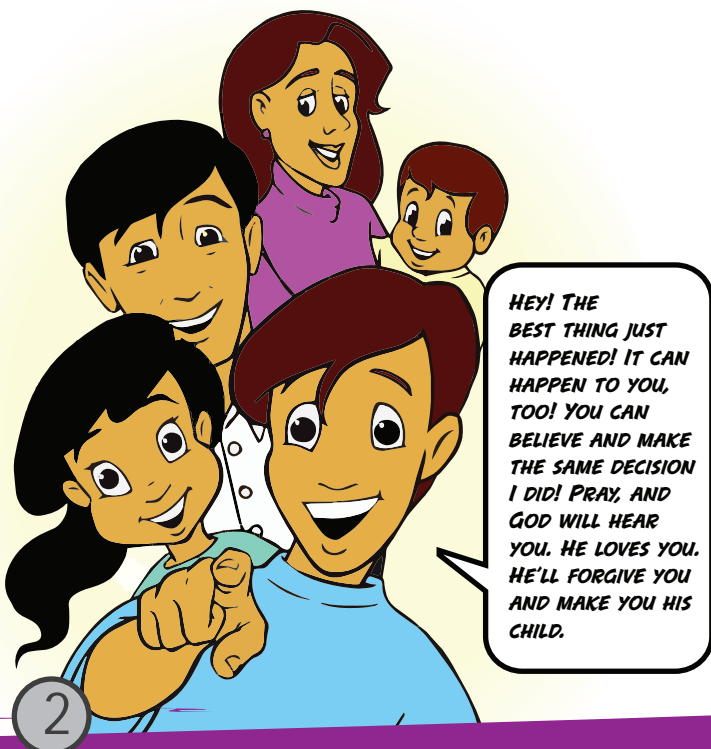


Although the focus below is largely on technique and how to conduct evangelistic parties for kids, there must be thorough preparation by the governing church body beforehand.

It begins with a desire and vision to reach children of a nation or community, and it is absolutely key that those who undertake this form of outreach have a burning passion for evangelism and children!

There must be preparation, not only in the facilitation of the events but spiritually, with prayer and fasting. Then, there must be training with an emphasis on practice – especially of the Gospel presentation.

The overall strategy is key but after 25 years of experience in Vietnam, they have also learned that The Most Important Story evangelistic book is an integral element that cannot be left out. Not only is it a comprehensive, clear, compelling presentation of the Gospel, it has an unusual and profound emphasis on children.



Throughout the book, children, their roles and their relationship to Jesus are emphasized. It starts when the parents explain that God's solution for sinful mankind began with a baby – the birth of the Lord Himself. Jesus as a 12-year-old, teaching in the temple is highlighted, followed by Jesus, the healer, going to Jairus' daughter to heal her and raise her from the dead. Then, when 5,000 men and many others, were faint with hunger, Jesus turned to a little boy with two fish and five loaves and multiplied what he shared, feeding the vast crowd. Then, Jesus is depicted with children, telling His disciples, "Let the children come to me."

The message is clear. Jesus loves children, and they have a very special place in His heart and a special role in the Kingdom of God.

The book concludes with the boy declaring that he wants to become a child of God and after praying to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, his parents tell the boy the important things that God has for him to do. It immediately directs him to look outward, "...to tell people about Jesus and show them God's love and power." Adding Matthew 28:19, "...Go and make disciples."

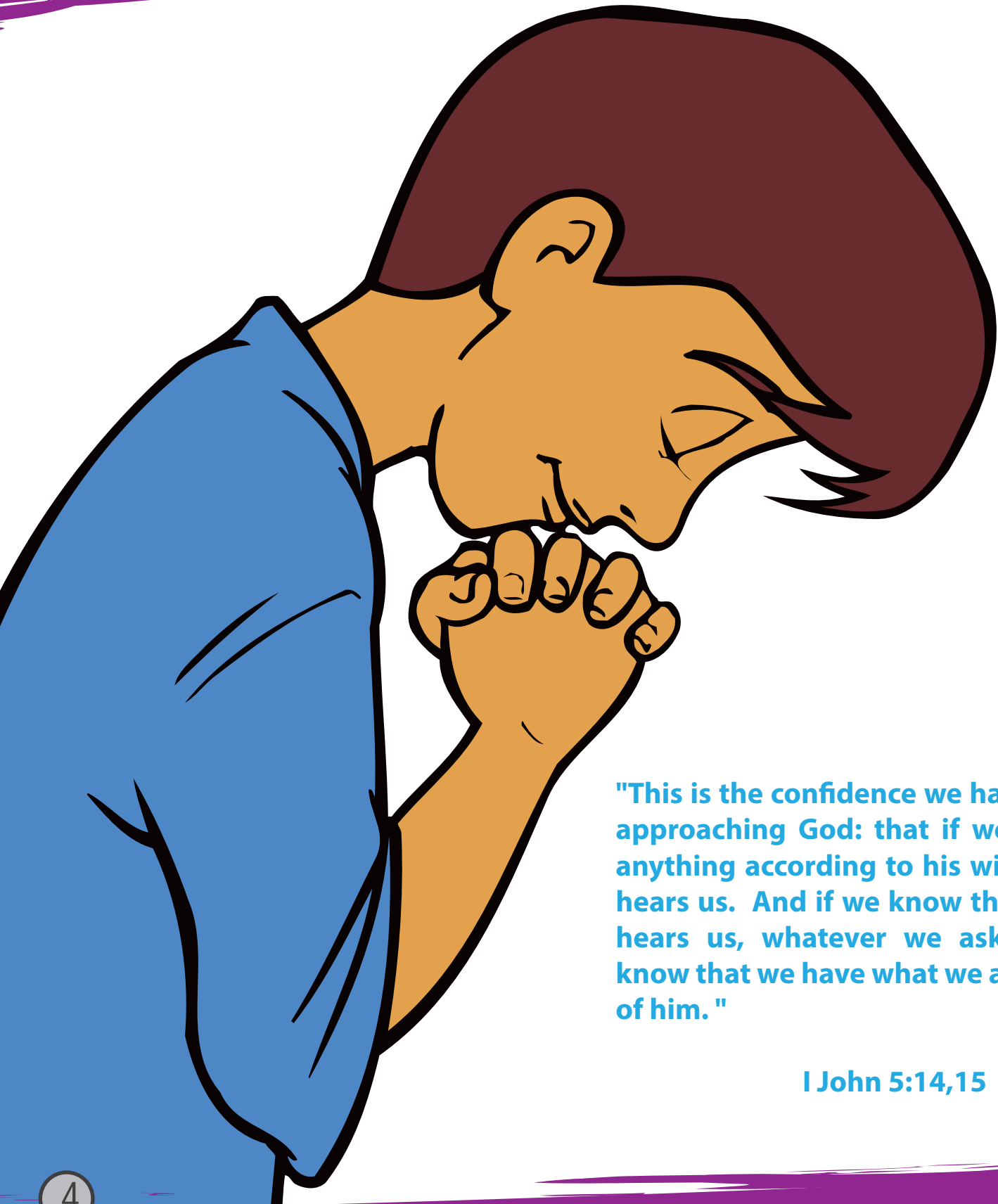
The mother declares, "After Jesus went up to heaven, he sent us the Holy Spirit. He'll guide you and teach you and give you God's special strength to tell others." The boy then responds, "I want to tell my friends!"

For 25 years, the children of Vietnam have been doing just that and from the South to the far North on China's border. Over 400 self-supporting churches have been established with an additional 1,200+ cell groups. Tens of thousands of children and adults have turned to Christ.

It is time to take this methodology and all they have learned in Vietnam to the rest of the world.



STEP 1 PRAYER



"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have what we asked of him."

1 John 5:14,15 (NIV)

THE VERY FIRST STEP IS PRAYER, ASKING FOR GOD'S GUIDANCE AND BLESSING

Begin by praying for your nation

Pray for your Province or State

Pray for your city/town/area.

Pray for the team who will carry out the event

Pray for the kids who will be invited, that their families will let them attend and that their hearts will be open to the Gospel message

STEP 2 LEADERSHIP ROLES AND REQUIREMENTS

Leadership is vitally important and a single leader as well as a coordinator must be appointed. Those chosen must have a passion to reach children as well as have a passion for the Gospel. There are three key roles, leader, coordinator and host family.

HOST FAMILY

There must be at least one family in the area as they will host the event and support the workers who organize the event as well as assist in the follow up work. You may well find that even non-believing families are willing to host the event and this invariably contributes greatly to that family becoming a believing family.

LEADER

A single leader must be appointed who is responsible for every aspect of the event. They will:

- Conduct program
- Present the Gospel presentation
- Give the invitation to accept Jesus
- Pray with children



COORDINATOR

A single coordinator should be appointed to help the leader.

Assist leader as needed

As soon as a location is determined, inform all local believing families and ask them to pray daily for those who will be reached.

Recruit inviters - Very importantly, there must be Christian children who will be instrumental in inviting local kids to the event. Of course, adult Christians can also invite families and children.

Meet with local church leaders to ensure there are enough volunteers to conduct the event.

Meet with volunteers before event to explain their roles and pray for event

Direct volunteers- give specific directions

Ideally, there should be one adult and one teenager to assist for every 10 children.

Oversee attendance

The goal is to have a minimum of 10 children but ideally 20-30+. If less than 10, the Gospel can be shared with the smaller group or even one on one.

Gather resources and supplies.

Materials: There must be enough Most Important Story (MIS) books and gifts of candy and cookies for each child. You should have a few extra goody bags if extra children attend and have 10-15% extra MIS books. Also, if possible, it is good to supply school supplies such as pens, pencils, crayons, and notebooks.

Optional: Song sheets, Gospel illustration pictures, coloring books, hand crafts (if time and location allow)

STEP 3 DETERMINE WHEN AND WHERE

WHEN

Under the leadership of local pastors, first recruit and then gather local children's workers to discuss the desired event. Appoint the leader and coordinator who will ultimately decide the date, time and location of the event. This of course will also be discussed with the local children's workers to ensure the timing and location work for everyone.

Consider the best time for the event based on the location and when volunteers are available. Focus on special times of the year and consider what location works best for a particular occasion. The best time is when kids are on school breaks during summertime, on Sunday, or national holidays. The time of the event can be morning, afternoon, or evening depending on the season.

Consider occasions such as Christmas, New Year, Full moon festival, Fall Festival and the International Day of Children. Also consider events like birthdays, thanksgiving parties, graduation parties etc. Simply look for any reason that would contribute to a great event.





WHERE

The location should be where Christian workers can hold the event and the follow up sessions. In rural settings, transportation assistance may be needed for the volunteers.

It is also important to consider the area in which the event is held as the possible location of a future home church and eventually a church.

STEP 4

GOSPEL PARTY

PREPARATION

The leader and coordinator will:

Tell their home church about the outreach party and ask for prayer and support.

Confirm with the host and confirm the exact time and date.

1. It should be announced first to the local Christians and should be done so in person as well as by phone, text, email, social media, etc. – Whatever is available and appropriate. However, children usually should only be told three days in advance as it is hard for young ones to wait.
2. Announce the event 2-4 weeks beforehand to leader, coordinator, host family, and volunteers. Usually a minimum of one week is recommended.
3. Encourage the Christian children to invite as many friends as possible and share that they will receive gifts of cookies and candies, and that they will have a chance to play fun games and meet new friends. They should also share with their friends that they will hear about the Gospel and learn about Jesus so they can be saved by God and become His child. Even if the Christian children are not able to bring friends, it is still very important to allow them to attend as they will learn much more themselves and be further inspired to invite others in the future.



THE EVENT

The program should last 60 minutes but if it is held in a believers' home, it can be up to 90 minutes long.

The coordinator and volunteers should report at least 1-2 hours in advance to pray, prepare, decorate, and organize.

As the children arrive, have one adult female (When culturally acceptable and appropriate, male greeters can welcome the boys.) warmly greet them and another record their names, ages and addresses (if appropriate and available). This is very important for future follow up.

When ready to begin, quiet the kids and give a very brief introduction of the leaders and then describe the first game or activity. It is important to begin right away with something fun that helps overcome any nervousness. This acts as an ice breaker and gets everyone comfortable and enjoying themselves.

The leader and coordinator should decide ahead of time what each is to do but the leader is the one who gives the introduction and the Gospel presentation.

STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY



GAME

- Choose a very simple game that is easily learned. If it is a larger group, it must be a game that can be done with the kids staying in place.
- Depends on age and needs to be suitable
- Fun and simple and make kids comfortable
- Usually something simple like repeat actions – i.e., Hold your nose, pull your ear, touch your head, rub your stomach, stand on one leg, etc.

SONG

- Teach a very simple Bible-related song – no more than two verses and repeat 3-4 times so kids can learn
- Use song with motions so even if they don't know all words, they can join in and kids need to be active and love being so. Make sure the leaders and volunteers participate with energy.



STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY



INTRODUCTION

- Depends on occasion but keep it brief
- Share that we are here to have fun, play games, sing songs and get a book and treat.
- Also, we are here to learn something very important. We will learn about Jesus, who He is and what He has done and what He can do for you.
- If it is an occasion such as Christmas, share about Jesus' birth and that in God's plan, He sent His son in human form to show us His love and to save us. This can be expanded upon of course.
- Depending on the occasion, just use your creativity to tie in the introduction

GOSPEL PRESENTATION WITH MIS

Hand out copies of The Most Important Story to each child beforehand or, if The Most Important Story app is available, use it instead of the book. If you use the app, hand out the print copies later.

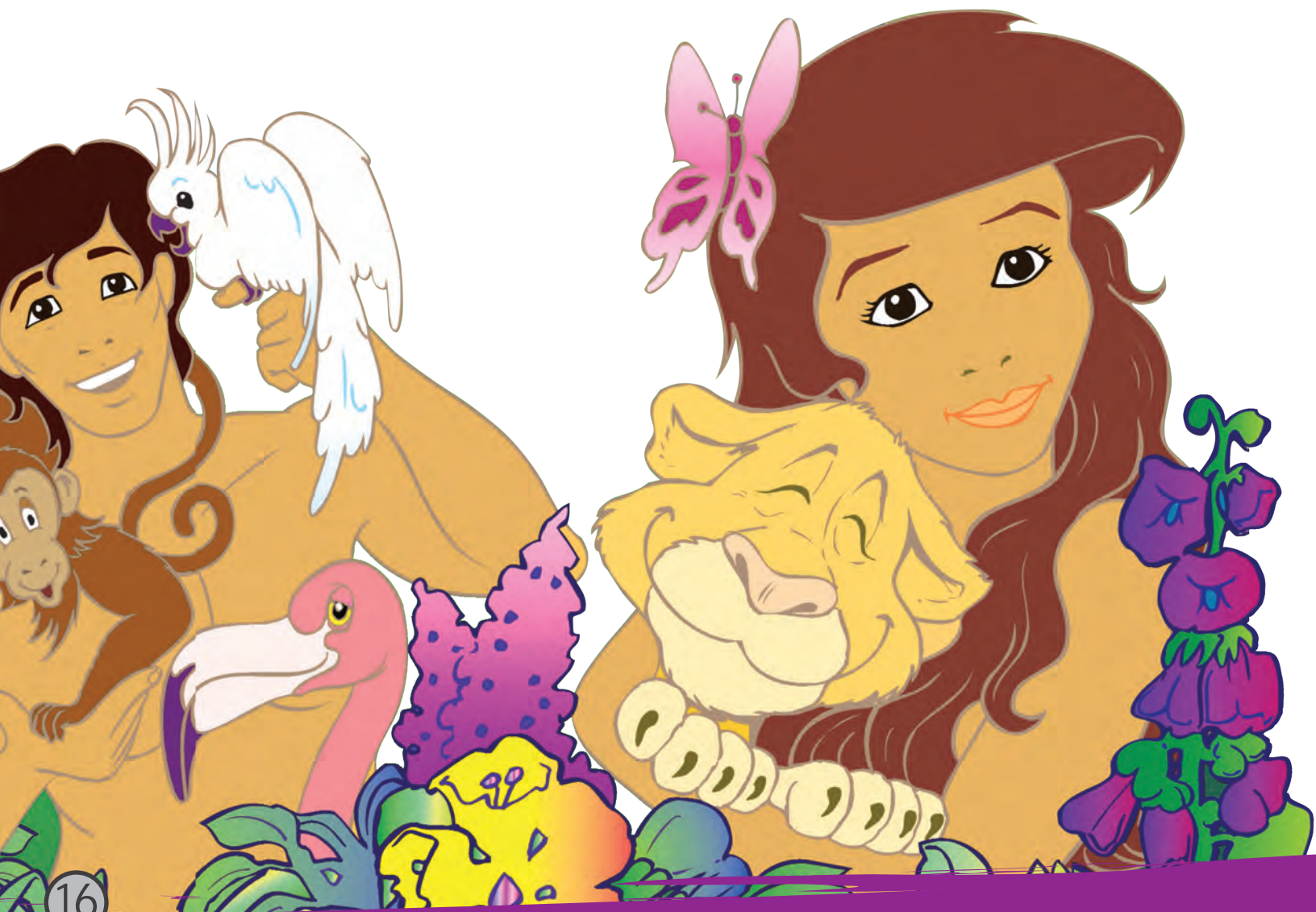
- 10-15 minutes long
- There are four main points to focus on:
 - 1) We are all sinners, and we need God's forgiveness
 - 2) Jesus – who he is and what he did on earth
 - 3) Jesus love for us and His sacrifice for us
 - 4) Receive Jesus as your Savior and become a child of God
- Hold up a copy of The Most Important Story and a Bible and state: We are about to learn of the most important story from the most important book, the Bible. Everything we learn today is from the Bible.
- Make the presentation yours but here are the important points you can use.
- Hold up the MIS book and open to the creation spread. Then open to the appropriate spreads as you share.

It is very important that the presenter practice the Gospel presentation many, many times to be able to share a powerful, compelling presentation.

STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY

GOSPEL PRESENTATION WITH MIS (CONT.)

Start with a brief overview of creation and the warning to not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.



- Share how Adam and Eve disobeyed God and that act was sin and separated them from God and everyone who came after them was born sinful and also separated from God. We all sin when we do bad things.
- But God had a plan to bring us back to Him and it started with a baby.
- God sent His own Son as a baby and his mother was told to name him Jesus, "...for He will save his people from their sins."
- Jesus came to save us and remove the separation from God.
- Jesus grew up just like you kids, except He never did anything wrong. He never sinned.
- Even as a 12-year-old, he was respected and loved. He taught everyone about God's love.
- He said, "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."
- Jesus helped people to understand God's love and one way he did this was by healing people.
- Jesus also did other wonderful and amazing things. He calmed storms and walked on water.
- One time there were thousands of people who were listening to Jesus and they became very hungry but there was no food. A little boy had two fish and five loaves of bread that he offered to Jesus. Jesus gave thanks to God and did a miracle, turning those few things into enough to feed all the people. There was so much food that there were 12 baskets of bread left over.
- Jesus was showing that God can meet all their needs and all our needs. He will do the same for us when we ask him.

STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY

GOSPEL PRESENTATION WITH MIS (CONT.)

- Jesus especially loved children. He told his followers, "Let the children come to me."
- But there were people who were very jealous of Jesus and they became angry and wanted to get rid of him.
- They made a plan, and one night they arrested him, and they beat him although he had done nothing wrong.
- They even wanted to kill him, and they did so by nailing him to a cross.
- But it was all part of God's plan. Remember we talked about being separated from God like Adam and Eve because of sin. Well, our sin must be punished, and God sent his own perfect Son, Jesus to die and take the punishment for our sins. Jesus ended that separation and because of Him, we can become children of God.
- But that is not the end of the story. Jesus body was placed in a tomb but God's plan all along was to raise him from the dead. Three days after he died, that is what happened, and his followers saw him and talked with him.
- He was with them for many weeks, teaching them but then he told his followers that he had to return to heaven.
- He said, "It is actually best for you that I go away, because if I don't, the Holy Spirit won't come. If I do go away, he will come, because I will send him to you."
- The Holy Spirit will teach us about God and help us obey Him and give us strength to share with others.
- One day Jesus will return and come back for all of God's children. That is everyone who believes Jesus died for them and has been forgiven. We will be with him forever.



STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY



GOSPEL PRESENTATION WITH MIS (CONT.)

Invitation and Prayer of Salvation

If you have the app, it is very conducive to the invitation and upon the close, you can simply say, "You can become a child of God right now. Raise your hands if you would like to be a child of God and invite Jesus into your heart."

For those who don't have the app, you can share something like the following:

Jesus said he had come to seek and save the lost. That's us. Every one of us. It says in the Bible, "...to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

The Bible also says, "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by confessing with your mouth that you are saved."

Today, we are here to tell you that this invitation is for you. Today, if you receive him and believe in his name, you can become a child of God. It is very simple. You simply raise your hand to show us that you believe and that you want to become a child of God.

Raise your hands if that is your desire.”

Allow enough time as some need a few minutes. Then, invite those kids forward if space allows or have them stand where they are. Tell them you are going to lead in a prayer that is simply talking to God. Tell them you will say a few words that they are to repeat. Remember to keep the phrases short.

“Raise your hands if that is your desire.”



STEP 4 GOSPEL PARTY



GOSPEL PRESENTATION WITH MIS (CONT.)

Close your eyes and pray with me:

"Dear God, I know I have sinned.

I made wrong choices and did bad things.

I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

I know your Son, Jesus, died for my sins, and I believe you raised him from the dead.

I want Jesus to be my Lord.

Thank you for loving me and making me your child.

Now, please fill me with your Holy Spirit, so I'll have all the strength I need to obey you.

Amen."

Then say, "Welcome to the family of God! You are now a child of God."

The leader then prays for the kids.

Then say, to get to know God better, be sure to talk to Him in prayer and read about Him in The Most Important Story book. God loves us and wants us to share His love with others and tell them about Jesus so they too can become children of God.

Review with a few simple questions – You received Jesus as your savior, where is Jesus now? Etc.

Have kids rejoin group or sit down.

Song

- Do one or two songs as time allows. Again, make sure there are actions.
- Perhaps something like “Jesus Loves Me” or whatever you have in the language being used.

Conclusion

- Ask questions of whole group. Such as:
- What did you learn today about Jesus?
- What was your favorite part today?
- How could you share Jesus with others?
- Close in prayer and then offer to meet again
- Tell them: “Come and hear more stories and we will have more songs and games.”
- “We told you about Jesus but there is so much more to share about what he has done and what He can do for you.”
- Tell them your team will be in touch to let them know when the follow-up meeting will take place.

Have the volunteers ready and close out the event. Make sure each of the kids receives a copy of The Most Important Story. Hand out the goody bags and take photos if appropriate. If more children attend than there are books and gifts, then ask the kids to come back the following week to get their gifts or arrange otherwise.

Although the program is intended to reach children, invariably curious and even concerned adults will watch and listen. In many cases, parents are also willing to pray to receive Christ when it is seen that they are interested. Then also invite them to pray, usually separately from the kids.

NEXT STEPS



As the children shared their names when they attended the event, and the workers made careful notation of who prayed to accept Christ, the first step of follow up is to pray daily for them. Then, the children's workers and the local church workers will work together on the exact follow up, depending on the location and schedules.

Ideally, the first follow-up meeting will take place one week later. You can share that there will be at least four meetings that all the kids are welcome to attend. Most often, even kids who did not pray to receive Christ will attend. Frequently new children will want to attend who did not attend the evangelistic event and make sure to welcome them. It gives a wonderful opportunity to then introduce them to Jesus and invite them to make a decision for Christ during the follow up meetings.

MIS DISCIPLESHIP LESSONS

If at all possible, plan to have a minimum of four weeks of follow-up and discipleship. Each week, there will be one main focus. It is also important to also work to engage the kids and let them have fun with games and songs.

LESSON ONE – Child of God

LESSON TWO – Prayer

LESSON THREE – The Holy Spirit

LESSON FOUR – Following Jesus

GUIDEBOOK SUPPLEMENT – Testimonies, stories of Guidebook parties and more.





Vietnam -- Children, the Future of the Church

Lien Huu Co Doc (Christian Fellowship Church) in Vietnam, has grown from 30 some cell groups to over 1,000 churches along with over 1,200 cell groups in just the last 25 years. A large part of their success has not only been their ministry to and through children but, more fundamentally, how they view them.

In 1975, when communism swept the country, the church entered a period of great trial and tribulation. However, just as in the book of Acts, persecution caused the church to become strong and grow. It was not so apparent at first but then reports of a resilient church began to appear. During this time, evangelism was prohibited and especially so to children.

There was widespread persecution and great intimidation. Many were sent to prison and many more lost everything they owned. Christian children were not exempt from attention and intimidation. Often when the children went to school, the Christian kids were ridiculed by the adults and sent home crying. They were told if they would forsake Christ and report on their parents, they could go back to school. Every day, all over the country, Christian children would go home in tears.

But that is not the end of the story. Many children along with their parents became bold. Officials would swoop into a village and terrorize the Christians. Churches were destroyed and Bibles confiscated or destroyed.

One day an official not only confiscated the Bibles in a village but began to tear them up in front of the believers. A little girl marched up to the very intimidating communist official and shook her finger at him saying, "If you tear up that Bible, God is going to tear you up." The man didn't know quite what to do and jumped on his motorcycle and sped off. Not far down the road he had a crash and was severely injured.

Stories like this began to spread and the Church grew bolder.

Christian leadership in Vietnam began to view the children with new eyes. They saw children dynamically live out their faith, standing for Christ, sharing the Gospel with others, praying for others and seeing wonderful answers to their prayers. This brought great encouragement to the Church.

Then, as the Church began to really focus on children and endeavor to reach them for Christ, they didn't see them just as children, but they considered them as the foundation of the church. They saw them as members and then future church leaders and even pastors.

This emphasis saw children blossom into dynamic witnesses who brought life and inspiration to the church. Instead of babysitting the kids, they trained them and mobilized them. They, in effect, became church planters.



GUIDEBOOK SUPPLEMENT

Children would ask their parents for copies of The Most Important Story to take to school to share with their classmates. Their friends also wanted to get personal copies so more were needed. In one family, two young boys brought 10 copies at a time to school. They eventually gave out 140 copies between them and then invited the kids to attend evangelistic parties.

As children attended the parties and gave their lives to Christ, they would return home to their unbelieving parents and they were taught to pray for them. They saw the changed behavior of their children and heard them tearfully pray for their salvation, and their hearts melted. Countless numbers of parents turned to Christ.

That is how cell groups and then churches were established. In many cases the parents, won to Christ through their own kids, became active in their faith and some even eventually became pastors.

Over the years, the Church has worked hard to disciple the children and equip them for ministry. As kids would come home after sharing the MIS at school, they would share with their parents the questions they were asked. The parents would then help prepare them to be able to answer those questions.

So, as the Church in Vietnam searched for the most effective way to evangelize their country and establish new and vibrant churches, they learned that the answer was first to realize that children were the future of the Church. As they then valued them, reached them, disciplined them and equipped them, they saw a great movement of God that has swept the country.

May the example of Lien Huu Co Doc encourage the church around the world to view children with new eyes and highly value not only who they are but who they will become. Remember Jesus' admonition, "Let the children come to me..."