# Session 8: Models of Mobilization

***Objectives:***

* Examine mobilization that leads to life-long transformation
* Learn about four additional approaches to mission mobilization that bring temporary results
* Compare and contrast different models of mobilizing children

***Teaching Time:***  30 minutes, 45-50 minutes with translation

***Materials:***

* Session 8 handout for every participant
* Orange (or piece of fruit)
* “Stand Up for Oranges” sign from Teaching Aids folder
* tape

***Getting Ready:***

1. Print “Stand Up for Oranges” Sign.

Introduction
Ask any Christian if they believe in the Great Commission and they will tell you *yes*.

You could even ask them if they believe that God desires every believer to be involved in seeing the Great Commission fulfilled and they will likely tell you they do.

So why do so few Christians, and churches for that matter, participate in taking the gospel to the least reached?

Why is the global story of God and His mission not a part of what we teach our children on a regular basis?

Why is it that the harvest is still so great and the laborers are still so few?

For the most part, it comes down to beliefs and convictions.

Someone once said, “A belief is something that you hold. A conviction is something that holds *you*.”

We all hold a lot of beliefs, but few of our beliefs become convictions.

Beliefs are things we give thought to, but that do not penetrate into action.

Beliefs become convictions when they direct the way we live our lives.

When we talk about convictions, we use words like passion, burden, or dedication.

Many believe in the Great Commission, but few are convicted to do something about it.

Through mobilization, we can invite others to move beyond simply *believing* the Great Commission to becoming *convicted* about it.

We invite them to join us in living out God’s global purpose.

When we mobilize children, we are equipping them to know God’s heart and the status of the world and then releasing them into their part in God’s big story.

It is really about raising children with one overarching conviction: that God has called all believers to join Him in reaching the nations with the gospel.

But how do we mobilize children effectively?

What will lead to that conviction, to a life-long transformation in their spiritual lives?

In order to answer this question, we need to consider 1) How we view God’s mission and 2) How we mobilize towards God’s mission.

How you understand mission will affect how you mobilize others.

There are five different approaches we take to mobilizing towards mission.

All five of these are biblical and right to some degree, but only one approach, on its own, leads to the long-term conviction and heart transformation we desire.

# Mobilization that Transforms

Let us start by looking at the type of mission mobilization that will most impact our children.

Mission as joining God in accomplishing His global purpose.

The basis is that God is pursuing His own global purpose. It communicates that God gives each one of us a part in fulfilling the task of mission by joining with Him.

When we talk about this type of mission, we might say, “God’s desire is to be known and worshipped by every nation,” or “God invites us to join Him in His big story.”

Let us pretend like this orange [or whichever local fruit is familiar to your audience] is the object of our mission and my goal is to mobilize each of you to buy it.

Here is what I might say in trying to sell this orange (Hold up the orange. With hope and excitement say…)

*The Lord of heaven and earth created this orange. Since the beginning of time, He has been about helping people find life through eating oranges. He wants you to experience the joy of eating this orange and invites you to help others find that same joy by joining with Him wherever He leads.*

When we mobilize children towards this type of mission, we develop for them a vision for the great story by and for God in order to describe the mission given to us.

We cultivate a passion and love for God.

With our children, we help them see God’s big story through every page of Scripture.

We highlight how God has been working throughout all of human history and show specific strategies of mission as ways to complete the task, not the motivation to do the task.

The focus is that God will get more love and worship.

# Other Approaches to Mobilization

There are four additional approaches to mobilization that we use. As we said earlier, each of these is true to a certain degree.

However, when isolated from joining with God in His global purposes, these mobilization efforts lead to short term impact.

Let us take a look at these four approaches and examine what they are, what it looks like when we mobilize children using these methods, and how to connect each approach with joining God in His global purposes.

1. Mission as a response to need

The basis is that believers should meet needs of all kinds. When we talk about this type of mission, we think about all the needs Scripture tells us to meet.

We might say, “We need to… care for the poor, help the widow and orphan.” What else? (Allow participants to share one to two additional needs expressed in Scripture.)

Let us continue to pretend like this orange is the object of our mission. Here is what I might say in trying to sell this orange with a needs-based approach.

(Accentuate your voice to sound desperate and pleading.)

*Please, please buy this orange. This orange is hurting and alone. It has no one to care for it. It is unwanted. Desperate. Needy. Pleaaaassseeee…..* (Hold the orange up to a participant in front row in a posture of begging.)

When we mobilize towards this type of missions, we highlight needs.

We try to evoke compassion and emotion.

God does call us as believers to meet the physical and tangible needs of people. This is a true type of missions work.

But the activity of doing it should be rooted in the overarching motivation of joining with God in His global purposes.

This is what we do not want to do:

* Show our children pictures of wounded and starving children and talk about how hopeless those children are.
* Make a child feel guilty for not eating all his food by highlighting others who may be without.

When we do this, the focus is on people and their desperate state of hopelessness.

Instead, we want to:

* Talk about how each person is created in God’s image and how much He loves each one of them when our children see pictures of starving or hurting people.
* Emphasize that true hope is found in Jesus, who is at work redeeming people to Himself.

When we do this, the focus is on God bringing forth His Kingdom in some of the poorest communities on earth and our joining with Him in extending His hope.

1. Mission as obedience to command

The basis of this type of mission is obligation to a divine command, either moral or missional.

We might say, “We must or have to… witness to others, give to missions.”

(Hold up the orange again. In an assertive, firm voice say…)

*Do you see this orange? You have to buy this orange. You are commanded to eat fruits and vegetables every day! Therefore, you have to buy it whether you want it or not!*

When we mobilize towards this type of missions, we explain the importance of the command and highlight an urgency to respond.

Throughout Scripture, there are many commands to go, make disciples, and be a part of God’s mission. We as believers do need to respond in obedience.

This obedience, however, should flow from a desire to obey because we love Jesus and want to faithfully follow Him. Without that love, we get caught up in legalism and outward religious actions like the Pharisees.

This is what we do not want to do with our children:

* Demand that they to do things without explaining why we do them.
* Scare them with the eternal consequences for unreached peoples if we do not obey God’s command to go.

When we do this, the focus is on an outward human action, not a heart response to God.

Instead, we should:

* Talk about these commands in the context of our relationship with Jesus and the joy of obedience.
* Emphasize God’s ability to accomplish His purposes without us, but His grace in inviting us to join Him in that work.

This shifts the focus to walking in obedience out of a deep love for Jesus and a desire to see His plans fulfilled.

1. Mission as an ethical duty

The basis here is that we are obligated not just by a Biblical command, but also by the character or the uniqueness of who we are.

We might say, “We ought to go because we have the ability to do great things if we do,” or “If we do not do this, who will?”

(Hold up the orange and point to a participant in the front row. In an inspiring, optimistic voice, say…)

*You! You there. Do you see this orange? You ought to buy this orange! Just think of what would happen if you bought this orange. You and this orange would change the world! If you do not buy this orange, who will? You were uniquely designed for such a time as this. Only you can buy this orange and use it for good.*

When we mobilize towards this type of mission, we emphasize our own high value.

We are indeed a holy and chosen people. We have been set apart. But we are chosen, holy, and set apart not because of our own merit or worth, but because of Jesus – who He is and what He has done.

He is the main character of the story; we are only vessels through which He works.

This is what we do not want to do with our children:

* Recount stories or examples of believers who have done great and daring things in a way that idolizes their own character more than God’s power working through them.
* Place the destiny of others on them alone by overemphasizing their unique potential to deal with needs.

This places the focus on our own strengths and abilities. There is not much need for God here.

Instead, try to:

* Highlight how God used Bible characters and people in history, inviting them into His story.
* Call out ways God has gifted our children for the purpose of bringing Him glory.

The focus is seeing our uniqueness as part of God’s plans for working through the Church to reach the nations. (Ephesians 2:10)

1. Mission as self-sacrifice

The basis here is that you ought to love others more, be less selfish and more authentic. It also focuses on activism to bring about change.

We might say, “We need to join this protest,” or “We ought to be more sacrificial and more committed.”

(Hold up orange. In a factual voice say…)

*Do you not understand? If you would just wear this sign* (tape “Stand Up for Oranges” sign to your shirt*), more oranges would be rescued instead of left on the street. People would stop spending their money on costly, processed, packaged foods and would instead invest their money in good, pure fruit. You need to set the example!*

When we mobilize towards this type of mission, we contrast a selfish, consumer-driven life with a loving, missional lifestyle. We highlight needs and then call for action.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to pick up our cross daily. We have different priorities than those around us, and we get to use our voice to speak up for things that are right.

However, Jesus does not desire sacrifices made out of obligation or guilt.

As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:3,

*If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,but do not have love, I gain nothing.* (1 Corinthians 13:3)

We make personal sacrifices, out of the Holy Spirit’s leading, because we believe Jesus is worthy to be worshipped not only by our lives, but also by the vast array of peoples He has created.

Be careful to not:

* Describe actions in missions as exemplary in a way that infers that global workers and others belong to a higher subset of believers.
* Exaggerate to children that the desire to have any material things is evil and makes us unworthy followers of Jesus.

This leads to a spirit of condemnation as we strive to measure up to others, and often exhaustion from serving out of a place of duty or guilt rather than God’s strength.

Instead, try to:

* Balance discussions about how God blesses us so that we can be a blessing to others with God being a gracious Father who wants us to enjoy His good gifts.
* Acknowledge that we are each called to our own unique journey where we will be asked to do different things and be given different blessings. Avoid a spirit of judging one another.

The focus is on following Jesus with open hands, offering all our money, gifts, abilities, desires, and dreams to be used, as He needs for His purposes.

As I said in the beginning, these four types of mission and mobilization strategies are biblical, but only produce long-term healthy results in our children when taught within the broader picture of joining with God in His purpose.

Often, you will find it much easier to use these other four approaches with children. It is easier to tell them to obey than to cultivate hearts that want to obey.

But if we do not take the extra time required to align these strategies with God’s overarching purpose, these mobilization efforts can become toxic.

When our mobilization efforts are not rooted in God as our motivation, we often are relying on emotional responses to influence our children’s decisions and actions.

Emotions are temporary. One day, the guilt or the fear, or the sadness wears off. Or another cause comes along.

When the emotions are gone, what will keep us committed to God’s mission?

In order for long-term transformation to occur, any mobilization effort among children must be rooted in their relationship with Jesus.

We need to encourage our children to do it *with* Jesus, not *for* Jesus. (2 Corinthians 6:1)

They need a deep understanding of God’s mission to become foundational in their life. This foundation will enable them to make decisions and respond each day, regardless of what emotions they feel.

# Becoming a World Christian Child

What is our end goal? What does success look like?

A world Christian child… can see God’s mission woven into everyday Bible stories.

A world Christian child… knows what people in other religions believe and how that compares to God’s Word.

A world Christian child… can find places like China, India, Uganda, and Peru on a world map.

A world Christian child… recognizes the names of Amy Carmichael, Bekele Shanko [Use name of well-known missionary from your region] and Hudson Taylor.

A world Christian child… can tell you about an unreached people group, where they live, and prays for them regularly.

A world Christian child… notices the children in their class that are different from everyone else and seeks out becoming their friend.

A world Christian child… desires to use the money they earned as a way to support a missionary working among the unreached, not just spend it on themselves.

A world Christian child… is so excited about how God is working in the world that they can not help but invite their friends and family into being a part of it with them.

A world Christian child… loves and worships Jesus as the Savior of the world.

A world Christian child… gazes up at a sky filled with twinkling stars and realizes God’s plan is infinitely bigger than his or her own backyard.

A world Christian child… dreams about being a part of God’s big story.

# Conclusion

Whether you are a pastor, a teacher, or a parent, your words and actions have a profound impact on the children in your life.

How we talk about God, how we explain His mission, will impact our children’s understanding of Jesus and the lives they choose to live.

We do not want them simply to *believe* the Great Commission.

We want them to grow up convicted about it in a way that changes their lives.

We want them to live each day as disciples of the Savior of the world so that every Christian child would confidently be able to say his or her life reflects God’s heart for all peoples.