

Session 7: God's Work

Objective:

- Understand that God is actively working in the world
- Know that God invites our children to be a part of what He is doing in their generation
- Explore five habits that exemplify a World Christian
- Learn ways to develop these five habits in our family

Teaching Time: 1 hour 25 minutes, 1 hour 45 minutes with translation

Materials:

- Bible
- Session 7 handout for each participant
- Session 7 People Outlines from Teaching Aids folder (Moravian Children, Indonesia children's teams, Hope Smith, Today's Child)
- Four clothespins
- Session 7 World Christian Habits Story Signs from Teaching Aids folder
- Session 7 Sample Family Map, Part 2 from Teaching Aids folder
- tape
- (Optional) The 5 Habits Song video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S0aC3zrRIkg>

Getting Ready:

1. Print out the Session 7 People Outlines teaching aid. Cut out each person outline.
2. Print out the World Christian Habits Story Signs and hang them around the room before this session. Leave enough space between each one for small groups to gather around them. (For large groups, you will need to print duplicate copies of each sign.)
3. Pass out the Session 7 handout to participants before the session begins.

Introduction

In the last session, we learned about God's world, the peoples of the earth that God created and loves.

Now we will focus on God's work. In Bible times, throughout all of history, and in the current events of today's world, God has been at work fulfilling His mission to make Himself known among all nations.

In this session, we will explore five specific ways that God invites our families into the work that He is doing in our day.

God Uses People in His Plans

God has raised up individuals and groups of people to join with Him in His work in every historical era.

God wrote our families into His story at this time in world history. It is no accident that we were born in this century or that we live in a particular region of the world.

Think about the events in the book of Esther. When Mordecai encouraged Queen Esther to go to the king on behalf of the Jewish people, he said,

Who knows? It's possible that you became queen for a time just like this. (Esther 4:14)

God has something in mind, not only for us, but also for our children.

Our children need to know that God not only uses adults to advance His mission, but uses boys and girls just like them in His story.

In some cases, children have been pivotal in God's work.

Historical Movements Where Children Were Pivotal

1. *The year was 1727. The place was Germany* - The Moravian community was fasting and praying. Just like at Pentecost, the Holy Spirit moved, bringing revival and focus, first among the adults, and then the children.

One historian said, "All the children were seized with an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit, and spent the whole night in prayer. No words can express the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit upon these children, whose lives were so transformed."^[i]

The entire Moravian community began a prayer meeting that lasted for 100 years - this included the children. Night and day, at every hour, believers took turns interceding for the nations of the world. From that century-long prayer meeting, came the beginning of the modern missions movement.

(Hang people outline #1, Moravian Children, on the timeline after Paul.)

Did God use children in history? Yes He did.

2. *The year was 1965. The place was Indonesia* - Revival swept across the island of Timor, not only among the adults, but among children as well.

One observer said, "Boys and girls wept and prayed for the nations, laid hands on the sick, and went into the jungles to preach Christ in the villages. We called them our children's teams."^[ii]

(Hang people outline #2, Indonesia Children's Teams, on the timeline after Moravian Children.)

Did God use children in history? Yes He did.

Not only does God use groups of children. He also uses individuals.

3. *The year was 1997. The place was the United States* - Hope was a nine-year-old girl whose parents were teaching her to love and follow Jesus.

For a school assignment, she researched the country of Mongolia. As she read more about the Mongolian people, Hope was sad to learn that in a country of three million people, there were only five known believers of Jesus. Most people had never even heard of Jesus. They did not worship the true God, but prayed to little idol statues in their tents. Hope also learned that people in Mongolia did not have Bibles.

Hope's parents had taught her about prayer and her family had often prayed together for people who did not know Jesus. So Hope began to pray for the people of Mongolia. She asked God to send Christians from other countries to Mongolia. She prayed that inside their homes, the Mongolian people would have Bibles instead of idols. Hope prayed every day for two years.

In 1999, Hope saw a magazine article about Mongolia. The title said, "Hope for Mongolia." The article reported that 500 Mongolians had believed in Jesus. God had answered Hope's prayers.

Today, thousands of Mongolian people believe in Jesus and worship Him instead of idols. There are churches where people can read the Bible in their language and learn more about God. One of the first churches in Mongolia was in the capital city. It was called Hope Assembly.^[iii]

(Hang people outline #3, Hope Smith, on the timeline after Indonesia Children's Teams.)

Did God use children in history? Yes He did.

How would knowing stories of how God has worked through other children impact them?

(Allow one or two people to share their ideas.)

Think of the children in your life – in your home, or in the families at your church. Can you see their faces?

Imagine them saying, "I am a world changer and I have an appointed place in God's story."

Casting Vision

We have seen that throughout history, God has been advancing His mission, and that God uses people, including children, in His plans.

As parents, how do we cast a vision for the part our own children can play in God's mission today, in this day and age?

Bible Basis

Use your Bible. Share verses with your family that show that God wants to use boys and girls and that He has jobs for them to do. Ephesians 2:10 says,

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. (Ephesians 2:10)

Share verses that help your children understand why God blesses them. Psalm 67:6-7 says,

God, our God blesses us. May God bless us still, so that All the ends of the earth will fear him." (Psalm 67:6b-7)

Opportunities to Partner with God

While we cast this vision, we need to give our children multiple opportunities to partner with God, starting while they are young.

We want to empower our children. The most empowering thing we can do for our children is to let them see God at work.

Do not just tell them how great God is. Let them see it and know it for themselves.

I would like to tell you a story about an eight-year-old girl named Alexandra.

Every week, she was saving coins. She wanted to use the money she found and earned for God, so she told her parents.

They could have just taken the money and given it for her. Or they could have told her to put it in the offering at church.

They even could have taught her about giving but then told her she could keep it since she was young and it was not very much money.

But Alexandra's parents did not do any of those things. They told her to pray and ask God what she should do with it.

They had taught her about prayer and listening to God. They had taught her about being a good steward and giving back to God. Now was Alexandra's chance to put into practice what she learned.

Alexandra prayed every day. At the end of the week, she told her parents what God was telling her to do.

That Sunday, she walked into a classroom at church and stood there, holding a tattered white bag in her hands.

When her former teacher walked in, she held the bag up to her and said, "God told me to give this to you for your ministry."

Inside the white bag was a smaller, clear bag filled with coins and bills.

Tears filled the teacher's eyes.

What Alexandra did not know was that her teacher was wrestling about where God was leading her. She felt like God was calling her to go into missions, but was scared to raise support and depend on others. She was afraid God would not provide for her needs.

Alexandra had given her teacher \$72.47, about ____ [Insert amount converted into host country's currency. For example, 1,397 Ethiopian Birr.]

It was not very much money in the grand scheme of things.

But more than money, God used Alexandra and her obedience to give her teacher the courage to step into her part in His story.

The next day, her teacher signed a contract with a mission organization and began full-time ministry as a mission mobilizer focused on children and families.

Five years later, that teacher and her team launched the BIG Story Training you are participating in right now.

We are here today because two parents gave their eight-year-old daughter the opportunity to be a part of God's work.

I believe Alexandra is a partner with us in all God has done through this training.

God has built the desire for meaning into our lives.

We each crave a significant task, a special assignment that demonstrates an individual's worth to the people he considers important.

It is a desire God places in us.

"When we help our children take on significant tasks, they have the freedom to find true contentment in who and what they are, in why they were created, and in what they were created to do."^[iv]

World Christian Habits

If the children in our families have the potential to be world changers, what are some specific ways that God may use them as modern-day characters in His story?

(Hang people outline #4, Today's Child, on the timeline after Hope Smith.)

How might God use them to bless the unreached (put your hands over your ears), the 2.7 billion people who have no access to the gospel in our day?

Let us talk about five different ways that children, or adults, can be involved in God's mission today. We call these practices World Christian Habits.

- *World* because these practices are grounded in a biblical view of God's heart for the world and His global purposes and flow from a desire to see God glorified among the nations.
- *Christian* because these practices are for all believers, not just a select group—not just for pastors, or seminary students, or missionaries, or grown-ups.
- *Habits* because these are not a one-time action, but are ongoing practices that become part of everyday life.

These habits are listed on your handout. Find the section called World Christian Habits Activity (Allow participants time to locate this section.)

The five habits are praying, going, welcoming, sending, and mobilizing.

World Christian Habits Activity

Let's do an activity to learn more about each of these habits and what they might look like in our family life.

On your handout are definitions of the five habits and Bible references for each one.

Around the room are stories of children who are practicing these habits in their families. (Draw their attention to the signs.)

First, read through the definitions by yourself. You do not need to look up the verses.

When you are finished reading the definitions, take your handout and pen to one of the stories hanging on the wall. Even though the stories are numbered, you can start at any story you choose.

Read the story to yourself and decide which habit that child is practicing. On your handout, write the number of the story below the habit that it matches. (Show them where to put the number on their handout.)

Then move to a new story and do the same thing. When you have matched all five stories to a habit, return to your seat.

If you have time while others are finishing, you can look up and read the Bible verses on your handout.

(Address questions and direct participants to begin reading the handout. After about 20 minutes, or when most people have completed the story-matching activity, call the group back together.)

Let's check our answers together. Which story was an example of a praying? (Have participants say the number aloud. Continue in the same way for the other four habits and correct as needed. Answers: Praying: Story # 4 ; Going: Story # 3 ; Welcoming: Story # 5 ; Sending: Story # 1 ; Mobilizing: Story # 2)

The activities in these stories are called World Christian habits. In your home, your children already have some habits in place -- getting dressed in the morning, washing their hands, brushing their teeth, combing their hair, and doing their homework.

As babies, they did not know these things. How are habits formed at home? What people and things are important in the process? (Allow responses. As participants share, provide labels for their examples like teaching, modeling, practicing, encouraging, correcting, ongoing actions, etc.)

World Christian habits are formed in much the same way.

What about the habit of praying? What is one way you could develop a habit of praying for the unreached peoples of the world in your family? (Allow one person to briefly share an idea. If the idea shared does not include a focus on the unreached or those working among them, help participants see how the idea can be adjusted to include that.)

Small Group Discussion

Let's continue to think about different ways to develop World Christian habits.

(Have participants form groups of 8-10 people. Assign each group two World Christian habits to discuss. Make sure that all five habits get equal attention. Then continue with the directions below.)

Look on your handout and find the section called Small Group Discussion. (Allow participants to locate this section.)

For each habit that was assigned to your group, discuss the two questions on your handout:

1. *How does this habit help to reach the unreached?*
2. *What are one or two ways to develop this habit in my family?*

The stories you read earlier are just examples. Feel free to use your creativity to come up with your own ideas of what will work in your families, in your culture. Use the definitions on your handout to help you.

Also, think about what you have learned about God's mission and who the unreached peoples are.

You may begin. (After about 10-12 minutes for discussion, call the groups back together.)

Let's go through each habit and share some of our ideas. Let's begin with praying. How does praying help to reach the unreached peoples? (Allow 1-2 groups to share.)

What is one way you could develop the habit of praying for the world in your family? (Allow 1-2 groups to share.)

(Continue in this way until groups have addressed all five habits. **Note:** For the "Goer" habit, you may want to add this thought after groups have shared: Most children who are goers begin by sharing the gospel in their own communities with their unbelieving friends and neighbors.)

God wants to use the children in our families as pray-ers, goers, welcomers, senders, and mobilizers.

As parents, God wants to use you to cultivate these habits that begin in your home and impact the nations.

Some of the World Christian habits may be practiced more often than others. As a family, you can pray for and send others to the unreached on a daily or weekly basis.

Other habits like welcoming, going, or mobilizing other believers to join in God's mission are exercised as opportunities arise throughout the year.

God might even be calling your family to go as harvest workers among the unreached in a different part of the world.

All five habits are to become a regular, ongoing part of our family life, just like eating, working, playing, and sleeping.

As we saw in session one, God’s overarching mission of blessing the nations is woven throughout all of Scripture. In the same way, God’s mission is to be woven throughout our family life.

Believing families, living out these habits day after day, resulting in children who become adults who continue to live out these habits in their daily lives, will be a significant part of seeing Revelation 7:9 realized.

(If time permits, use this time to share “The 5 Habits Song” video or share the link with the group. Participants have the link to the video in their handout.)

Family Mapping: Part 2

Now that we have explored these five habits, look back at your family map that you drew in session Two.

Considering the giftings, opportunities, resources and blessings that your family has been given, how might you incorporate the five habits into your family map?

(Hold up sample family map, part 2 for reference) For example, maybe Dad can designate some of the money that he earns to give to global workers in an unreached people group (point to drawing of Dad). Or maybe the family can incorporate prayer for the unreached into their time at home together (point to family drawing).

I will give you five minutes to begin adding World Christian Habits to your map.

(Allow 5 minutes for participants to add to their family map before calling their attention to the front.)

Conclusion

In this session, we learned about a purposeful God and the way He has worked throughout history, and still works in our day, to advance His mission.

We need to teach our children that God invites them to join in what He is doing to make His name great among the nations in their generation ... and then empower them and give them opportunities to serve.

[i] *The History of Revivals of Religion* by William E Allen.

[ii] *Like a Mighty Wind* by Mel Tari.

[iii] *Kids Making A Difference* by Pete Hohmann.

[iv] *Rite of Passage Parenting* by Walker Moore.