



How to Give Kids a Heart for the Nations

Developing a heart for the nations is a foundational layer of resilient discipleship. Opening our eyes to see the world around us requires us to make intentional choices that, when made frequently, awaken us to see God's kingdom in our everyday moments. So, how do we help kids grow in this area of discipleship? Here are seven ways you can begin to cultivate the hearts of the kids in your community to see the world through God's eyes!



Display God's World

Take an inventory of your learning environment and ask yourself, "Does this space celebrate the diversity of God's created world?" Consider hanging a map on the wall or displaying a globe for children to touch and explore. If you're purchasing toys or books for your classrooms, thoughtfully choose authors, dolls and toys to reflect children from all over the world.



Ask Questions to Engage Their Imaginations

Have you ever found yourself falling into "answer mode" when kids ask questions about God and their world? Consider responding with a question to stimulate their brains and set them on a track of discovery. By turning the conversation around, you engage their imagination and allow them to visually connect with the Body of Christ in a place they've never visited!



Connect With Your Church's Mission Team

Spend time with your small group of kids discovering the ways your church is intentionally partnering with missionaries and organizations around the world. Brainstorm how your group can help serve the mission. It will expand everyone's understanding of God's global family!



Be Honest

As your children open their eyes to the world around them, they will see the vast ways they can love one another as the Body of Christ. On the flip side, they will also see the way they can painfully hurt one another because they don't love as Jesus does. Talk through this struggle with your kids and give them practical ways to learn to walk in the ways of Jesus. When they begin to connect their life with a specific need, it just might push them to bring change and hope to the world.



Follow the Leader

Do you believe you can make a difference? One of the biggest mistakes we can make is to unintentionally communicate that international missions are reserved for exceptional people. Spoiler alert: They're not. It's important for kids to see how you contextualize the Great Commission in your life.



Teach to a Child's Developmental Stage

Knowing what a child can handle developmentally will shape the way you engage them with God's world. To be clear, all children have the capacity to engage in some unique way.

Early Childhood: Kids are explorers in this stage. Provide a safe environment for them to become aware of the larger world. Focus on simple concepts like praying for other parts of the world, writing letters to missionaries and churches, or learning about a particular country or culture.

Later Childhood: Children are ready to be involved in this stage, and they love to learn. You can be their adventure guide! Help them develop a deeper understanding of the world around them by engaging them in activities that connect them to people beyond your church community. Utilize your favorite video platform to host conversations with global church leaders, partner with churches in your area, or participate in a pickup soccer game with neighborhood kids at a local park.

Tweens: By the time the "tween" years arrive, kids are aware a larger world exists and understand they can play a part in it. Provide ways for them to develop their sense of identity, which is tested through their interpersonal relationships. Let them know they are capable of amazing things and God-sized opportunities!



Do It Together

Empower kids to make an impact on their world through their unique design, and join them as they do so! When you connect to your local community and to the church globally, kids will see the world in the way God designed it — a beautiful reflection of Himself.

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