

INDIA

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 1

Missionaries Come to India



Watkin Roberts

India

Lesson 1: Missionaries Come to India

Goals for Lesson 1:

- Students will understand that missionaries have been telling others about Jesus ever since He rose from the dead, and that the people of India were introduced to Jesus during the first century.
- Students will be introduced to the verse for India, and begin to understand that without Jesus, the people of India are stumbling under a heavy burden of poverty and sin.
- Students will begin to build a base of knowledge about the country of India and its history that will aid in the understanding of the Indian people and their culture.

Verse for India:

Jesus said, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV)

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide what you will use according to your age group and time allotted.
- Prepare the India Verse Cards as directed to be used for all India Lessons. For Lesson 1, use sticky tack or some other method to attach them in order onto a poster board (place the poster board horizontally). When cards are attached, use a colored marker to draw a line under each card and the reference, thereby marking the spot for each word for future verse activities. The pictures help to illustrate the verse so that students can understand some of the unfamiliar words.
- Make one copy of the verse puzzle page for each of your students. Collect glue sticks and scissors for each child.
- Prepare picture of Watkin Roberts from the Lesson cover as a power point slide, or print it and back it with cardstock for stability.
- Collect several lengths of material, between 1 ½ yards and 5 yards in length (44" in width with both selvedge edges intact). Read the "Sari or Dohti" activity and practice wrapping the clothing. Decide how you will use this activity and prepare accordingly. (You will use this material again for Lesson 4, so keep it handy.)
- Make copies of the Indian Elephant sheets to use in class or take home. Collect crayons or markers if you will use it in class.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with a welcome, announcements and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Show students the poster board with the word cards attached. Tell them that this is the verse we will be learning for India. Read through the verse once out loud. Take each picture card and talk about the illustration. Some are self-explanatory, but others will need some explanation (many modern children do not know what a yoke is). Read through the verse once together as a class. Give each child a copy of the India Verse Page and a glue stick and pair of scissors. Give them a few minutes to cut out the pictures and glue them into place in their verse. (Non-readers will be able to copy the picture placement from the poster board verse.) This will be their own visual take-home reminder of the verse and will enable them to internalize the meanings of the picture words. Finish by reading the verse aloud together from their India Verse Page. (15-20 min.)
- Tell the students the story part of the lesson. Discuss the idea that it was because of persecution and hardship that the early Christians were scattered all over the known world. Thomas was taken to India against his will, but God used his presence there to introduce this already Hindu area of the world to Jesus Christ. (15-20 min.)
- Take out lengths of material and show children how the Indian people have traditionally used colorful material to wrap themselves in loose, comfortable clothing. Wrap yourself and then take some volunteers to make their own Indian clothing. When several children are dressed, have them act out the short folktale from ancient India, or the story of Thomas introducing the Maharaja to Jesus. (20-30 min.)
- Use the elephant sheets as a final activity in class, or send them home to do later. (5-10 min.)

Lesson 1 Story: Missionaries Come to India

India is an ancient country. At the time when Jesus was on earth, the people living in India had a thriving culture. They followed the beliefs of Hinduism and Buddhism, and didn't know anything about the Jews and what was happening to the Son of God in Jerusalem.

After Jesus rose from the dead and went back into Heaven, there came a time of great trouble for his followers. They were forced to scatter to many different lands in order to survive, and as they went, they told everyone they met that Jesus was the Messiah, sent by God to sacrifice His life, to make a way for all people to go to Heaven.

One of Jesus' disciples, Thomas, the one who at first doubted that Jesus had risen, was captured by slave traders and taken to India, where he was sold to a king. At that time, the Indian people called their ruler "Majarahja" (mah-ha-RAH-jah). Thomas told the Majarahja and everyone he met about the miracles he had seen Jesus perform, and that Jesus had given His life as a sacrifice for them.

The Majarahja believed Thomas, and many others did as well. A Christian church was started, but the Hindu people in the area were not happy. They attacked Thomas and killed him, but they could not kill the Good News of Jesus, God's Son. The Church of St. Thomas has continued in India for almost 2000 years, and is still strong and growing in some areas.

The Hindu people in India did not want Christian people there, so it was 1642 before missionaries from Europe were allowed to come to India again. Although these Christians set up schools and worked in some areas, many Indian people had still never heard about Jesus. Many of the Indian people were very poor and did not have a way to be educated. They worshiped the gods of Hinduism and struggled every day under a burden of poverty and trying to keep their gods happy. They didn't know that Jesus could free them from the heaviness of their sin and make their hearts lighter with his peace and love.

In 1907, a young Indian man named Thangkai (Tang-kye) heard about the Christian schools in other parts of India. He worked hard to earn enough money to pay for entrance into a school in another Indian state. As he began to learn how to read, he grew to love the Word of God and Jesus Christ, who had made a way for him to go to

Heaven. By 1911, Thangkai had finished his schooling, and the missionaries there told him to go back home to his own state and tell everyone he met about Jesus.

As Thangkai began talking to his friends and relatives in his home village in Northeast India, many believed in Jesus and the whole town began to change. A few years later, an English man from Wales named Watkin Roberts came to Northeast India and found Thangkai teaching his own people about Jesus. **(Show picture of Watkin Roberts from the cover page)**

Watkin Roberts wanted to help spread the Word of God, so he decided to send a gift of the Gospel of John to the chief of 100 tribal villages in the hill country around Northeast India. He waited several months, wondering what would happen. Then one day a messenger came, asking Watkin to come to his village. The chief could not understand the message of the gift and wanted Watkin to come teach his village about this book.

Many people in the tribal villages around the state of Manipur (MON-ah-poor), Northeast India learned about Jesus and became Christians through the teaching of Watkin Roberts. Soon the government decided that foreigners were not allowed to live in that state, so Watkin had to go home. But Indian men like Thangkai traveled throughout the area, teaching more and more people about Jesus.

By the 1930's, the first mission schools and churches were built in Manipur, and the government allowed Ella and Paul Rostad to live there and start a school. Ella had grown up in the Kimball Avenue E.C. Church in Chicago. This church and soon many other E.C. Churches in the United States began helping the Rostads in their work in Northeast India.

In another lesson, we will learn more about Ella and Paul Rostad and their work in Northeast India. As you can see, many people have been telling the Indian people the good news about Jesus ever since Jesus' disciple, Thomas, first came there almost 2000 years ago. Today, about 30 million people in India are Christians. Even though this is a lot of people, it only represents about 3% of the total population. About 80% of the people still practice Hinduism (this is about 810 million Hindus). The rest of the people (about 150 million) are Muslim, Buddhist, and other religions. Let's pray for the Christians in India as they continue to tell the people around them about Jesus.

India's Verse

_____ said, "Come to me, all you who are _____










and _____, and I will give you _____. Take my

_____ upon you and learn from me, for I am

_____ and _____ in _____, and you will

find _____ for your souls. For my _____ is easy

and my _____ _____." Matthew 11:28-30

					
Jesus	weary	burdened	rest	yoke	gentle
					
humble	heart	rest	yoke	burden	is light

Sari or Dohiti

Preparation: Find several lengths of cloth that can be used to make Indian clothing for the children. Indian clothing is simple and easily constructed with a little practice. It is simply cloth, wrapped around the body in a prescribed way. **Using the illustrations and directions below, practice on yourself several times before class so that you can quickly and easily illustrate the fabric wrapping to your students.** If possible, recruit a person who grew up in India to visit your class and talk with your students about Indian clothing, helping the students to dress themselves, or bringing some authentic Indian garments to try on. Students should dress themselves, with your direction and help. The easiest way would be for a woman to demonstrate a sari on herself, with girls copying her, and a man to demonstrate a dohti and turban, with boys copying him.

Cloth should be light-weight cotton material 44" wide and several yards long. A girl's sari (sahr-ee) would use 4-6 yards of material, depending on the size or age of the girl or woman. Girls like to wear very colorful, flowing material. A boy's dohti (dough-tee) would use 3-4 yards of material, depending on the size or age of the boy or man. His turban for his head would use 1 ½-2 yards of material. Boys like to wear white or light colored cotton material.

Sari: Your girl students can wear a shirt and shorts, pants or a skirt with a waistband or a belt under their sari. Starting on the right side, tuck the long edge of the material into the waistband until the bottom of the fabric is just above their feet. Continue tucking, including several pleats for fullness, completely around to the front again. Wrap loosely around the body again, not tucking this time, and bringing the material across the back and up under the right arm, across the chest and over the left shoulder, then over the head and over the right shoulder to hang down the front.

Dohiti: Your boy students can wear a shirt and shorts or pants under their dohti. Indian farmers don't wear a shirt as they work under the hot sun, like the boy pictured below. Fold the material in half the long way. Starting on the right side, tuck the double edges of the folded material into the waistband so that the bottom folded edge is just above the knees. Continue tucking, including several pleats for ease in movement, completely around to the back (1 ½ times around). Bring the rest of the material through the legs and tuck into the waistband in the front.

Turban: Fold material in half lengthwise. Starting at one ear, wrap the double edge of the material loosely around the head, behind the ears. Wrap twice around and then tuck the front edge under the material at the forehead. This will form a cylinder of cloth standing up on the head like a tall baker's hat. Remove the cylinder from the head and using both hands, roll the material in a large doughnut, down and outward so that the unrolled material is hanging down in the center of the roll. When there is about 6" of unrolled material, lay the roll back on top of the head and fold the unrolled material over the top of the hair and tuck it into the top inside of the roll.



When several volunteers are dressed in Indian clothing, ask them to act out the following short folktale from ancient India or the story of Thomas introducing the Maharajah to Jesus.

A Folktale from India*

Akbar, a great Indian emperor, had nine advisors in his court. His favorite advisor was named Birbal. He was a counselor, wise man, and jester to Akbar. Many stories are told about Birbal's wit, wisdom, and occasional silliness. Here is just one of the many folktales.

"Make It Shorter"

One day Akbar drew a line with his royal hand on the floor of the open court and commanded, "Make this line shorter, but don't by any means erase any part of it."

Everyone was stumped by this puzzle.

When it was Birbal's turn, he at once drew a longer line next to the first one. He didn't touch the first line.

Everyone in the court saw it and said, "That's true, the first line is shorter."

*Based on a story from *Folktales from India*, edited by A. K. Ramanujan, Pantheon Books, 1991.

