

INDIA

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 8

India's future



India

Lesson 8: India's Future

Goals for Lesson 8:

- Children will begin to grasp the devastating effects of poverty.
- Children will understand how weary and heavy the burden of poverty is not only on the people living there, but on the world as a whole.
- Children will understand that extreme poverty can be eradicated, and that they need to have a part in alleviating the suffering related to poverty in their own hometown as well as in other parts of the world.

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.
- Go to the following websites and educate yourself about poverty and the effects it has on children. Decide what you will share with your students. The short slide show at <http://home.freeuk.net/elloughton13/cday.htm> is about the city of Mumbai (previously Bombay). It is a kid's version of contrasting "Rich and Poor". Arrange to show it on a large screen in your classroom area. There is an 8 minute trailer video along with many other resources at <http://www.live58.org/> that you can use to educate yourself.
- Prepare both pictures, including the one from the lesson cover as power point slides, or print them and back them with cardstock for stability.
- Place only the picture cards in their appropriate spaces on the verse poster board. Plan for a small prize for those who succeed in saying the entire verse, using only the pictures as prompts.
- Collect art supplies necessary to finish your India quilt project.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with a welcome, announcements, and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Use the verse poster board and attach only the 12 picture cards in their appropriate spaces. Your students have studied this verse for many weeks now, and should be very familiar with it. Allow students to stand up and say the whole verse, using the blank spots on the poster board, along with the pictures as prompts. Give turns to any children who are willing to try. You might want to have a small prize available to those who succeed. (10 min.)
- Show the slideshow about Mumbai on a large screen. Answer questions or discuss as your students wish, then read or tell the story part of the lesson, again stopping to show the pictures and discuss as necessary. This is a sobering and difficult lesson. Adults cannot and should not shelter children from the ugliness of reality. That does not mean that children should be exposed to all of the gruesome details, or given so much information that they become fearful. Teaching children about reality should be done gently and sensitively and with a great deal of compassion, both for them and for those who suffer. God made the hearts of children to be particularly open and uninhibited in their ability to love and show compassion to those who are hurting. Our goal is to make our children aware of the plight of other children around the world, and awaken that compassion to action in changing the world for the next generation of children. Make sure you answer all of their questions honestly and gently, guiding their hearts to see how they can be part of the answer to these atrocities. (20-25 min.)
- Bring out the art supplies and the quilt project from Lesson 7. Try to get the quilt(s) completely finished, and hang them up for display. As you work, continue your discussion of India, reviewing the things you learned together, and using the quilt to remind students to pray for certain people and situations. Brainstorm about ideas of how they (individually or as a group) could make something better. (20-30 min.)

Lesson 8 Story: India's Future

Do you remember that India has the second largest population in the whole world? It is next to China in population, but it is less than one quarter the size of China. Since a good bit of the land is covered with unlivable deserts, mountains or jungles, this huge population of people is crowded into cities or lives in remote villages that are far from each other and isolated by rivers, mountains or dense forests.

Some of the people in India are very wealthy and well-educated, but many of the people live in very poor, crowded conditions and don't have access to a good education. Although the rail system is well developed, the road system is still largely unpaved, and can become dangerous mud during the rainy season. Since individual vehicles are scarce, walking or bicycling is still the most common way to travel short distances in India.

Because of the poor road system, most of the rural regions have no access to industry. The people must live on what they can produce for themselves. Rice is a main staple food, eaten at almost every meal. If the weather cooperates, farmers can grow rice and many kinds of vegetables. In some parts of the country, melons of all types, bananas, and coconuts can also be grown and eaten. Some years the crops don't grow well, and many people are hungry.

Christian and Muslim people eat some types of meat, but because of their belief in reincarnation, the Hindu people do not typically eat meat. Because 80% of the people in India are Hindu, there are many pigs, cows, chickens, water buffalo, cats, dogs and rats roaming freely in the streets, right among the bicycles, vehicles and walking people. Even though there would be plenty of meat available in a year when the crops fail, people suffer from malnutrition and even starve to death because they regard the animals as sacred.

Because of the huge number of free-roaming rodents and animals of all kinds, manure, insects and disease are a huge problem, not only in the rural areas, but in the large cities as well. Lack of clean water and inadequate or unavailable medical facilities in some parts of the country add to the heavy burden of disease, hunger and poverty. **(Show the picture of the slum on the edge of a modern city. Talk about the contrast between rich and poor, educated and uneducated, modern and mere survival.)**

When people can no longer support their families in the rural villages, they walk to the cities hoping to find work. These people, who arrive in the city with nothing but what they carried there, settle in slum areas that become huge suburbs. Families use anything they can find to put together a shelter for themselves, and often every member of the family, including small children try to earn a few pennies a day through working or begging. The streets outside their shelter are dirt or mud with open sewer ditches. The shelters consist of one room with no

running water or electricity, no bathroom facilities, and only a curtain for a door. **(Show the picture from the lesson cover and talk together about what they see in that picture. Help them to process the magnitude of what it means to truly have nothing.)**

The laws of India give all children between the ages of 6 and 14 the right to a free education. However, the schools are not funded by the government, so the parents must pay for their children's books and supplies, uniforms, and transportation if the school is too far for the child to walk. Even if a parent can afford to send a child to school, a teacher or an adequate building for holding classes may not be available. Besides this, a child who is old enough to work may be needed to care for or help support other family members. As you can see, there are many obstacles to school attendance. Less than 10% of all Indian children ever graduate from "medium" school (approximately 7th grade level).

Extreme poverty is one of the biggest problems facing India right now. Poverty not only affects the individual people, it affects the nation, and it affects the entire world. If people can't afford to send their children to school, the next generation will not have the skills necessary to earn money for their families to eat and go to school. If only 10% of a country's population ever gets as far as 7th grade, there will be little opportunity for the future advancement of a society. When whole nations are stuck in the cycle of poverty, other nations are affected as well. That means that the people in the United States cannot simply ignore the huge problem of poverty in India. It is up to the United States and other countries to help the people of India break out of the cycle of poverty and move into a better future.

To be rich, means to have more than someone else. We can always look around us and find someone who has less than we do. When we find someone with less, Jesus tells us to share what we have and not hold onto it. You can pray and ask Jesus what He would like you to do about the needs you see around you and in other parts of the world. Even though you are young, Jesus will give you ideas about what you can do to make things better. Many children your age have made a huge difference, just by caring about others and following the ideas Jesus plants in their hearts. You can make a huge difference, too. Don't ever be satisfied with things the way they are. We can always work to make things better.



So many people have moved to the cities to look for jobs that huge slum areas have grown around the edges of the large modern cities of India.