

LIBERIA

Lessons for Mission Minded Kids

Lesson 6

Liberian Families



Liberia

Lesson 6: Liberian Families

Goals for Lesson 6:

- Students will be able to identify similarities and differences between Liberian tribal families, Americo-Liberian families, and their own family.
- Students will understand that families everywhere need God's help in order to live in peace and harmony with each other.
- Students will be able to apply Psalm 25: 4-5 to God's plan for daily living in family relationships.

Verse for Liberia:

"Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long." Psalm 25: 4-5

Before Class:

- Read through lesson and decide how you will use the material, according to your age group and time allotted.
- If you are going to use the tribal family coloring page, make a copy for each student.
- Make a copy of the "Prayer for Liberia" puzzle for each student, or plan to divide your class into teams or pairs, with one copy for each.
- If you are going to make the Bookmark Prayer Reminders, prepare the following in a snack sized baggie for each student:
 1. One (8 in. x 2 in.) strip of craft foam for each child.
 2. Three (7 inch) lengths of yarn for each child.
 3. Nine pony beads for each child.
 4. A Church, a Bible and a Praying Hands sticker for each child.
- Gather markers, gel pens and a hole puncher
- If you will use the "Prayer Balloon" or Mamba game, or the "Prayer Walk activity, prepare accordingly, as directed in Lesson 2 and Lesson 4.

Lesson Plan:

- Open your time together with a welcome, announcements and a brief prayer. (5 min.)
- Give each student or group of students a “Prayer for Liberia” puzzle. Have students try to write Psalm 25:4-5 from memory. As each letter is used, cross it out below, until all letters have been used, completing the verse accurately. When students are done, or almost done, read it out loud together. If you have young students, pair them with older students, or divide your group into two or three teams who can work together to solve the puzzle. You can also use the poster board verse to give young students extra help. Sing the verse together when everyone is finished. (8-10 min.)
- Read or tell the story part of the lesson, applying the truths of our verse to the information about the difficulties of polygamy. Emphasize the wisdom of following God’s paths in every area of life in every area of the world. Remind the students that God’s truth brings hope to every person, including every Liberian and every American. (15-20 min.)
- Lay out materials for “Bookmark Prayer Reminders” and guide students in completing the craft, making sure they write their names on the back. Remind students to pray that the people of Liberia would accept God’s truth. (15-20 min.)
- Play “Prayer Balloons” or “Mamba” from Lesson 4, or do the “Prayer Walk” from Lesson 2. (10-15 min.)
- End with prayer for Liberian families, and our families here at home. Give students copies of “Tribal Family” coloring page to take home or finish in class. (5 min.)

Lesson 6 Story: Liberian Families

Last time we met we talked about some customs that Liberian people follow. Do you remember anything about the way they set their tables that is different from the way we set ours? We know that different people around the world live their lives differently than we do. Let's look at what family life is like for the Liberians. I mentioned before that family life is very important to the Liberians. We've also discussed that there are two different groups in Liberia, the tribal people and the Americo-Liberians. Do you think their family lives are similar to each other or different?

The family life of the Americo-Liberians, like many other aspects of their lives, is very similar to the lives of the Americans. One man meets one woman and then they fall in love, get married, and have children. Sometimes married Americo-Liberians live with their parents especially as the parents get older so that they can help take care of them. How many of you have grandparents that live with you? Unfortunately, just like here in America, sometimes married Americo-Liberians get divorced.

In Liberia, it might not always be immediate family members that live with each other in the same house. For example, if an Americo-Liberian meets a promising young tribal man, they may ask him to move in with their family. It is similar to adoption. While the young man lives with his "adopted" family, he can receive an education or learn a trade. The reason that the family allows the young man to move in with them is because they want the young man to have a better life and education than what he might receive if he stayed with his fellow tribesman.

The family ties are very strong in a tribal Liberian family. Many times a young man, often a teenager, will marry a young girl, who is a teenager as well. In Liberia, people generally get married at younger ages than we do here in America. When a young man grows older, he may marry another woman so that he will have two wives. This is a practice called polygamy. The older the man is, the more possible it is for him to have several wives. The reason he chooses to have more than one wife is to show his wealth, status and power within the tribe.

Another reason a tribal man might choose to take more than one wife is to have more children. All members of the family are expected to work to provide for the family, even the children. There is always much work to be done in gathering firewood, gathering and preparing food, growing food in a garden,

carrying water and washing clothing and building and maintaining the houses the family owns. That is why Liberian men try to have as many children as possible, so that they can be more prosperous with their farming. The harder they work the more money that can be earned and the more prosperous the family as a whole can be. The large family all lives together in one house or in several smaller houses all grouped together. **(Show picture of large family unit.)**

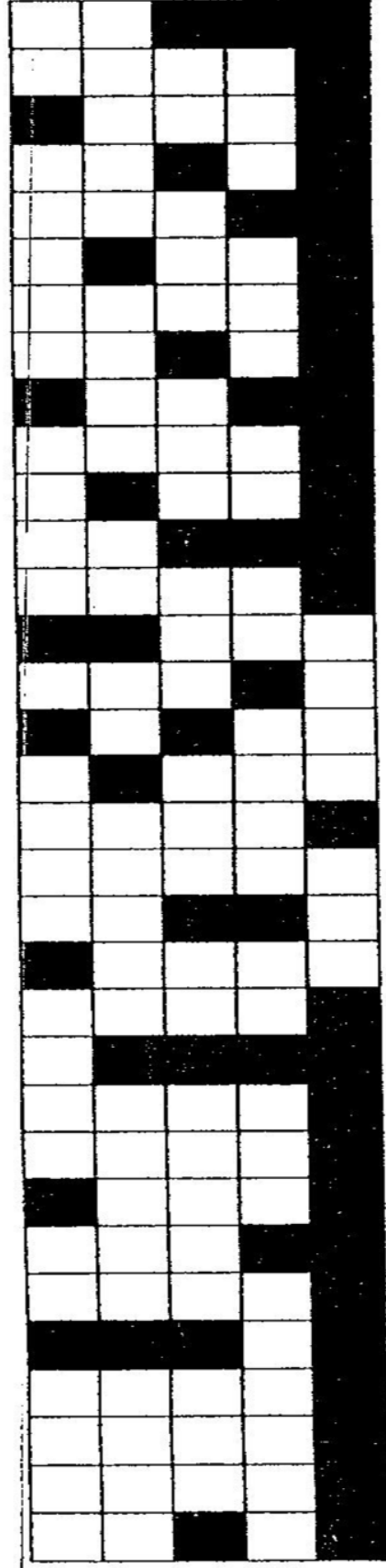
(Show picture of three children from Lesson Cover) Having such a large family with lots of brothers and sisters could be a lot of fun, but the practice of polygamy can cause numerous problems as well. Competition, jealousy, and quarreling between wives and siblings can make the family life difficult. How many of you fight sometimes with your brothers or sisters? Imagine if you had ten or fifteen or twenty brothers and sisters all fighting with each other. Life at home wouldn't be much fun would it? Tribal people have practiced polygamy for many years. It is part of their culture, and although it seems very different from how we live, it is very normal for them.

In recent years, tribal people moving into the cities along the coast have adopted more of a Western style of dressing and living. This is closer to how we live our lives. However, much of Liberia is still very remote and difficult to travel through. Many tribal people still live far from any modern buildings or conveniences, and the people still live as they have for hundreds of years. They wear their tribal clothing, grow and produce their accustomed foods, speak their tribal language and live in their family units the same way their ancestors did.

Regardless of how we live our lives, every person everywhere needs to know that our hope is in God, our Savior, and that if we follow His paths and learn His truth, He will help us with our family relationships, help us with the decisions we make, and teach us how to live wisely. Let's pray for our own families, as well as the families in Liberia, that each one would follow Jesus and learn to love each other and get along well.



Prayer For Liberia



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 SHNR MEANS MEIFOLMEI L IN UGAD AUM
 SOOI TATCH MDWHYSEOI ORD EYU TRMLE
 YAVWOPE AHOURUA AEROYGSNAROTRCHLYH

Bookmark Prayer Reminders

What To Do (Before Class)

1. Measure and cut out the fun foam strips (8" long x 2" wide) and the lengths of yarn (3 per child – 7" long).
2. Use the hole puncher to punch three holes along the bottom of each strip. **Note: There should be $\frac{1}{4}$ " space between the bottom of the strip and the bottom of the hole. If the hole is too close to the bottom, the yarn and beads could tear off.**
3. (Optional) Pre-package the strip, yarn, and beads for each child and place in individual plastic bags (time efficient). OR you can go the opposite route and place the supplies in piles on a table and allow the children to pick according to taste.

What To Do (In Class)

1. Have the children decorate the front of their bookmark with an African-style border and write "Liberia." (See sample design).
2. Next, the children will put the yarn through the holes and thread the beads on. They will have to wet the ends of the yarn in order to thread the beads. After all three beads are threaded, tie a knot below the last bead. **Note: Tell the children to make sure there is enough space for the beads to swing before they tie the knot. If everything is pulled too tight, the fun foam could tear.**
3. Finally, the children can decorate the back side with a border, too. Have them put on the stickers (praying hands on the top, church in the middle, and Bible below). Tell the children, "The praying hands are a reminder to pray for peace in Liberia, the church reminds us to pray that the churches will be rebuilt, the Bible reminds us to pray for the pastors and people who are without a Bible in their language, Bassa."

