

Student Study Guide

Introduction

The Mary Hill Davis Offering® for Texas Missions provides funding for over 70 ministries across Texas. When you give, you are helping people across the state share the love of Jesus with those who need to know Him as Savior.

This lesson will focus on The Baptist Student Ministry's (BSM) engagement with International Students.

Bible Verse

Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." – John 14:6 (ESV)

Background Information

For over one hundred years the Baptist Student Ministry (BSM) has been selflessly serving the college student community in many ways. In recent years, BSM has reached the nations through the diverse number of international students who come to the United States each year. Many think of international missions as a level of service that can only be done by those who can go overseas and engage with the culture. In reality, this mindset keeps the average believer from recognizing that the nations are coming to the United States. BSM has been serving the international students by persistently seeking to build a relationship with them and provide for their material as well as their spiritual needs. The student volunteers have a heart for God and a love for their peers regardless of nationality.

When International Students arrive, many of them do not have anything except what they carry in a suitcase. Many of them are all alone, in a new country, with no car or food, and limited knowledge of the new culture. By observing these needs, volunteers at BSMs across

Texas work to build relationships by coordinating airport pickups, hosting English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, and opening their homes to international students. BSMs across Texas have organized food and clothing drives, hosted welcome parties, and helped the students integrate into American culture..

By creating relationships with incoming international students, BSMs are able to meet needs for food, clothing, and community. These intentional relationships often lead to opportunities to share the light and love of Christ

Mission Study

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” –John 14:6

In 2016, the BSM at North Texas University engaged with over 1,900 international college students. They needed a new meeting space to provide free lunches, community fellowship, and worship. These activities are vital to engage with international students, providing volunteers the opportunity to build relationships that lay the groundwork to share Christ.

At Texas A&M University Kingsville, (TAMUK) in Kingsville, Texas, the local BSM recognized that incoming international students were separated from family, familiar friends, and connection with others. Because they found themselves in a new country with a new language and unfamiliar culture, students often felt isolated and alone, particularly during the 2020 Pandemic.

TAMUK BSM began to focus on building relationships. In 2021, they started a food

and clothing drive to benefit international students. They sent out box lunches to students in need, delivering the meals to the apartment complex where most of the international students lived. Through these acts of kindness and service, the volunteers at the TAMUK BSM were able to build relationships creating opportunities to point students toward the “Way, Truth, and The Life” that is Jesus Christ.

In 2021, the BSM at the University of Texas saw over 1,500 international students come to their campus. This comprised almost 25% of the total student population. BSM sought ways to engage with the international students in order to share Christ. They organized a welcome party with four other campuses, 20 churches, and 115 volunteers. On Saturday before classes began, they held Big Howdy. This massive event included airport pickups, and helping students get set up in dorms and apartments. Some volunteers even opened their homes to students who were having a hard time finding a place to live. BSM and their volunteers are intentional to make connections and build relationships

with the international students. Through the many connections and relationships that were built, the BSM's prayer was that these relationships lead to conversations where the Gospel can be shared.

The goal of this study is to develop an awareness in the students to see the needs of others in their own communities and how they can be a part of meeting those needs. Students will discuss ways to create, restore, or strengthen relationships around them, leading to open doors for opportunities to share the Gospel and point them to Christ who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life!

Station 1: Discuss

Discussion Questions:

1. Why was the BSM focused on creating, restoring, or strengthening relationships with international students?
2. Do you think that was important? Why or why not?
3. How do you build relationships in your life?
4. How do you recognize needs in others?
5. Are all needs physical needs? (Food, clothes, etc.)
6. What are some needs that are not physical needs? (mental, spiritual)
7. Why is it important to meet someone's physical needs before finding

opportunities to share the Gospel?

Have students answer these questions as they are drawing out the circles in Station 2 & 3.

Station 2: Community Discussion

Hand out blank pages and pens. Have students draw a small circle in the middle and write their name inside the circle to represent themselves. Have the students draw another circle outside the first and in the space between the circles, write the names of their parents and siblings to represent family.

Draw a third circle around the family circles and write the names of close friends. Draw a fourth circle outside of the last circle and write the names of people who are acquaintances from activities or events. Finally, draw a circle outside of the fourth circle and write the words *The Nations/ Everyone Else*.

These circles are important because they represent different spheres of influence. As the students are drawing circles, ask the following questions for them to think about.

- What are some ways you can strengthen or build a relationship with people in your spheres?
- How can you be a light in their life?
- What are some opportunities you see to share the Gospel with those in your spheres?
- What are some needs they have that

you can help meet?

After the diagram is done, ask the students to name someone with whom they can share the Gospel. We all know at least one person who needs to hear the Gospel of Christ. It could be anyone in any of the circles.

Have the students underline the name of the person they are thinking of. Ask the above questions, then discuss the questions from station one.

Station 3: Prayer, Bookmark, and Bracelet

- For this station you will need at least nine different colors of embroidery floss cut into 18 - 20 inch strands.
- Note Cards
- Pens, Markers, or Colored Pencils.

On a whiteboard, list some needs, difficulties, and prayer requests students learned about. These might include the need for relationships, clothes, food, and community.

Choose a single color of thread for each of these three categories:

- Needs
- Difficulties
- Prayer Requests

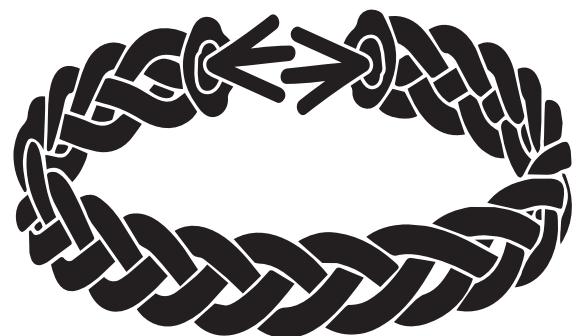
Braid the strands together. Students may choose to make either a bookmark or a bracelet. As they are working, discuss the following questions:

- What are some things you could do to strengthen or build relationships with

others?

- Why is it important to look for opportunities to share the Gospel?
- How can you build relationships with people, recognize and meet needs and share the Gospel within your circles of influence? What are some ways you can build relationships with people in your circles? (School, sports, etc)
- What are some ways you can show the love of Christ to the people in your circles?
- What are some ways you could share the gospel with the people in your circles?
- What is the difference between showing love and sharing the Gospel? How are they the same and how are they different?

If there is floss left over, the students may choose two threads from each category. Tie a knot at the top, connecting all the strands, then braid the strands. Leave about 4 inches at the bottom, and tie a knot leaving a tail. For a bookmark, cut off the excess thread. For a bracelet, tie another knot leaving about an inch of space between both knots.



There are many needs, difficulties, and prayer points for BSM International

Student Ministry. This activity is designed to help students remember to pray for the communities of international students in colleges all around the United States. Each color represents a different prayer, need, or difficulty these students face. These bracelets and bookmarks are meant to be a reminder to build relationships in the communities around them, and pray

that the Gospel will be shared with the international student community, and challenge them to look for needs within their circle that they can fill with the love of Christ.

For more information about Baptist Student Ministries and the International Student Ministry, visit txb.org/college.

ABOUT THE WRITER

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Who was Mary Hill Davis?

Mary Hill Davis was born in Greenville, Georgia, and came to Texas as a small child in 1870 when her family moved from Tennessee to Dallas. At age 20, she married F.S. Davis, a physician. They had one son, Raymond, also a physician and surgeon.

Mary was president of WMU from 1906 until 1931. Her heart for missions and people was evident in everything she did. Not only did she stir women to give and pray for missions (giving to the cooperative program rose over 1000% during her tenure as president, but to take care for retired pastors (at that time, pastors did not have retirements savings, and many lived in poverty), taking care of orphans, and also giving money to schools all over Texas, as well as China.

She believed Texas was a vast mission field, and that immigrants needed to know Jesus just as much as citizens. Each year, she spurred women to service, giving and prayer, leading to the establishment of State Missions Week in September, 1910. Remembering her remarkable leadership, in 1935 the offering for state missions was named the Mary Hill Davis Offering®. Almost 100 years later, her example still inspires Texas Baptists to give, to pray, and to go.