

# PRESCHOOL STUDY GUIDE



## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR TEXAS MISSIONS

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

MATTHEW 28:18-20 NIV

### LEARNING OBJECTIVE

Preschoolers will learn about the work of missionaries serving along the Texas/Mexico border.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Vanessa Quintanilla-Lerma and her husband Osvaldo, serve as missionaries through the River Ministry, a long-standing ministry of Texas Baptists. They live in Matamoros, Texas and have served as missionaries since 2001. The focus of River Ministry is to share the Gospel of Jesus on both sides of the Rio Grande River. With the onset of the pandemic and changes in government guidelines, the work along the border is always changing and Vanessa and other missionaries have learned to adjust, change, and pivot as needed. Vanessa describes the variety of work to include food distribution, working with volunteer teams along with training local pastors and church leadership.

As people approach the border to seek entrance into the United States, many are detained while waiting to go through the established processes. As a result, tent cities have risen on the Mexico side of the border. Some families live in actual tents while others live in shelters constructed from anything that can be found such as sticks, boards, and plastic roofing materials. A roof might even include a blanket draped over the top of the structure. Once teams can safely travel, projects can include painting homes as part of home restoration for residents, VBS, Back-to-School events, neighborhood block parties, and food distribution.

### THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Using blue plastic tablecloths or blue butcher paper, create the Rio Grande River dividing the meeting room in half. Use the signs provided under RESOURCES to identify each side of the river, one for Texas and one for Mexico.

Establish station rotations for small group learning experiences in different parts of the room.

- ★ Food Distribution Station
- ★ Gardening and Seed Station
- ★ Clothes Washing Station
- ★ Writing Cards Station

## Planning

### PRINT THE FOLLOWING ITEMS

- ★ Bible Thought Cards
- ★ Teaching Pictures
- ★ Let's Match and Remember Game Cards

### GATHER THE FOLLOWING MATERIALS (2 SETS)

- ★ Creating the Learning Environment
  - ★ Disposable blue plastic tablecloths or blue butcher paper

- ★ Brown construction paper
- ★ A tent
- ★ Cardboard boxes

#### ★ Food Distribution Station

- ★ Industrial size bags of beans and rice
- ★ Quart-size food storage bags
- ★ Plastic hand gloves
- ★ Plastic for floor covering

#### ★ Card Making Station

- ★ Construction paper
- ★ Crayons
- ★ Glue sticks
- ★ Stickers
- ★ Cards with Spanish phrases/Bible thoughts

#### ★ Clothes Washing Station

- ★ Tub or bucket with water
- ★ Variety of t-shirts, pants, washcloths, hand towels, etc.
- ★ Rope and clothespins
- ★ Bar of soap
- ★ Plastic for floor covering

#### ★ Gardening and Seed Planting Station

- ★ One plastic cup for each preschooler
- ★ One bean seed for each preschooler
- ★ Potting soil
- ★ Plastic for floor covering
- ★ Water

### SCHEDULE FOR A ONE-HOUR SESSION

- ★ Whole-Group Learning 10 minutes
- ★ Four Rotations 10 minutes each
- ★ Whole-Group Learning 10 minutes

### WHOLE-GROUP INTRODUCTION AS THE PRESCHOOLERS ARE ARRIVING

As preschoolers enter the room, alternate sending them to each side of the Rio Grande River.

**Say:** There are boys and girls just like you that live on both sides of the Rio Grande River. The river is a divider between two places, Mexico and Texas. Boys and girls on both sides of the river like to play games, learn new things, and be with their families. Boys and girls on both sides of the river need the same things: a place to live, food to eat, and clothes to wear. Boys and girls on both sides of the river need to hear about Jesus and His love for them.

Missionaries like Vanessa and Osvaldo Lerma live on the Texas

side of the river. They work every day to tell boys and girls and moms and dads about Jesus. Many families living on the Mexico side of the river want to come and live on the other side. Many have waited for many, many months to get permission to cross the river into Texas. There are no extra houses for the people to live in while they are waiting. Some families have made houses by using large pieces of black plastic. They find boards and cut the plastic to make rooms. Often the roof is a blanket or another piece of plastic. Many people have given tents to take across so that families can have a place to live. There is a very large "tent city" where many families live. You might be thinking that it would be fun living in a tent like when someone goes camping. This is different from going camping for a few days. Living in a tent with no other place to go has many problems. When it is cold outside, it is hard to get warm living in a tent. When it rains, it is hard to stay dry living in a tent. When it is very hot, it is hard to cool off when living in a tent. Vanessa goes across the river with things to give to families. She takes beans and rice, pots and pans, clothes and shoes, toothbrushes and toothpaste, soap, seeds, books, and balls. But the most important thing she takes to give away is the Bible.

Matthew 25:35 says: For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, <sup>36</sup> I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.

Paul wrote these words while he was in prison for teaching others about Jesus. However, the verse reminds us that God wants us to help meet the needs of people who are in need of food, water, clothing, encouragement, and knowing that Jesus loves them.

### LEARNING STATION

#### RICE AND BEAN DISTRIBUTION BAGS

**Bible Thought:** I was hungry and you gave me something to eat. ( Matthew 25:35a)

In this station, set up a table with materials needed to fill quart-size food bags with beans and rice. Fill one large bowl with beans and one large bowl with rice. Provide a scoop or measuring cup for preschoolers to use to fill up the bags. Give preschoolers plastic gloves to wear while they are filling the bags. As preschoolers fill the bags, **say:** Friends that live on the Texas side of the Rio Grande River make food bags like these and Vanessa takes the bags across the river to Mexico for families living in the tent cities. Meals may be cooked over an open fire outside of the tent. Boys and girls need food to grow strong and healthy. We thank God for money given to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. This offering helps missionaries like Vanessa take food to families.

Place a brown sheet of paper somewhere across the river.

**"I am Texas Missions - as you go make disciples"**

Once bags are filled, ask preschoolers to take the bags of rice and beans across the river to a designated spot near the tent.

After the session, take the bags of beans and rice and donate to a local food pantry.

## LEARNING STATION GARDEN AND SEED STATION

**Bible Thought:** Jesus said, "Love one another." (John 15:17)

As preschoolers gather around the container of soil, share the following information.

**Say:** One thing we can do to help boys and girls and their families that are living in the tent cities is to provide seeds for gardens. Over the next few weeks, you can bring vegetable seed packets to church, and we will send them to our missionary friends. They will give them to families so that they can grow fresh vegetables for food. To help us remember to pray for these families and missionaries, we are going to plant a seed in a cup. You will take the seed home. When you see it, remember to pray that those receiving packets of seeds will know that they are loved by Texas Baptists and that Jesus loves them very much.

Provide a plastic drinking cup, potting soil, and a bean seed for each child. Fill the cup three-fourths with soil. Add the bean seed. Cover the seed with soil. (For faster growing seeds, soak the seeds in water prior to planting.)

## LEARNING STATION MAKE AN ENCOURAGEMENT CARD

**Bible Thought:** We want to tell people about Jesus (Acts 4:20)

At this station, preschoolers will make a card for boys and girls. Prior to the session, print Bible Thought Cards with the Spanish Bible verses. After preschoolers have made a card, staple a Bible Thought card to the picture.

**Say:** Boys and girls living in the tent city may be lonely. Vanessa takes the cards and gives them to children when they deliver rice and bean bags. Our cards can show kindness to other children. Our cards remind them that we love Jesus and want to tell them about Him too.

## LEARNING STATION WASHING CLOTHES

**Bible Thought:** God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. (Psalm 46:1)

Set up a clothes washing station and allow preschoolers to "wash" clothes. Put a piece of plastic or plastic tablecloth underneath the water containers. Provide a selection of t-shirts, pants, etc. for preschoolers to wash in the tub or

bucket. Provide a bar of soap. Once they have washed an item, help them hang it on the clothesline.

**Say:** When families are living in a tent or a shelter made from boards and plastic, there is no place to wash clothes. Water will be brought to the spot they call home, or they may carry their clothes to a washing area that has water then carry the clothes back to their home. Clothes are washed in a bucket or tub of water and then hung on a line to dry.

Moms and dads get tired when living is so hard. They worry about their children. Pray for moms and dads that they might be strong and will trust God to give them strength.

## WHOLE-GROUP CONCLUSION

To conclude the session, play *Let's Match* and *Remember Game*. Prior to the session, print the game cards found in **Resources**. Pass out the picture cards. When the teacher says, "Go" preschoolers will find their picture-card match. When they find their partner, they will tell each other something they remember from the learning session. Play several rounds of the game.

Give each preschooler a plastic cup with a banner attached to the outside. Tell preschoolers that we want to give money to the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. Encourage them to put "Dimes and Dollars" in their cup throughout the week. Encourage them to ask mom and dad to let them do simple things around the house to earn money to give to missions.

Remind preschoolers to bring packets of seeds to the next meeting.

As preschoolers prepare to leave, **pray:** Thank you God for Vanessa. Keep her safe and strong as she serves you every day. Thank God for these boys and girls who love to help, pray, and give to missions. Help them to show God's love every day, everywhere they go. In Jesus' name. Amen

Written by: Jackie Faughn, McKinney, TX

### Please mail cards to

Vanessa Lerma  
601 Kendlewood Ave.  
McAllen, TX 78501

### Please mail seed packets to

Gloria Tillman  
C/O Baptist General Convention of Texas  
7557 Rambler Road, #1200  
Dallas, TX 75231-2388

### For more information about the River Ministry Missionaries, visit:

<https://texasbaptists.org/ministries/missions/river-ministry>

*Dios es nuestro refugio y fortaleza,  
una ayuda muy presente  
en los problemas.*

**SAMOS 46:1**



*God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help  
in trouble.*

**SEE PSALM 46:1**



*Jesús dijo:  
"Amaos los unos a los otros".*

**VEA JUAN 15:17**



*Jesus said,  
"Love one another."*

**SEE JOHN 15:17**



*DTenía hambre  
y me diste de comer.*

**VEA MATEO 25: 35A**



*I was hungry and  
you gave me something to eat.*

**SEE MATTHEW 25:35A**



*Queremos hablarle a la gente  
acerca de Jesús*

**VEA HECHOS 4:20**



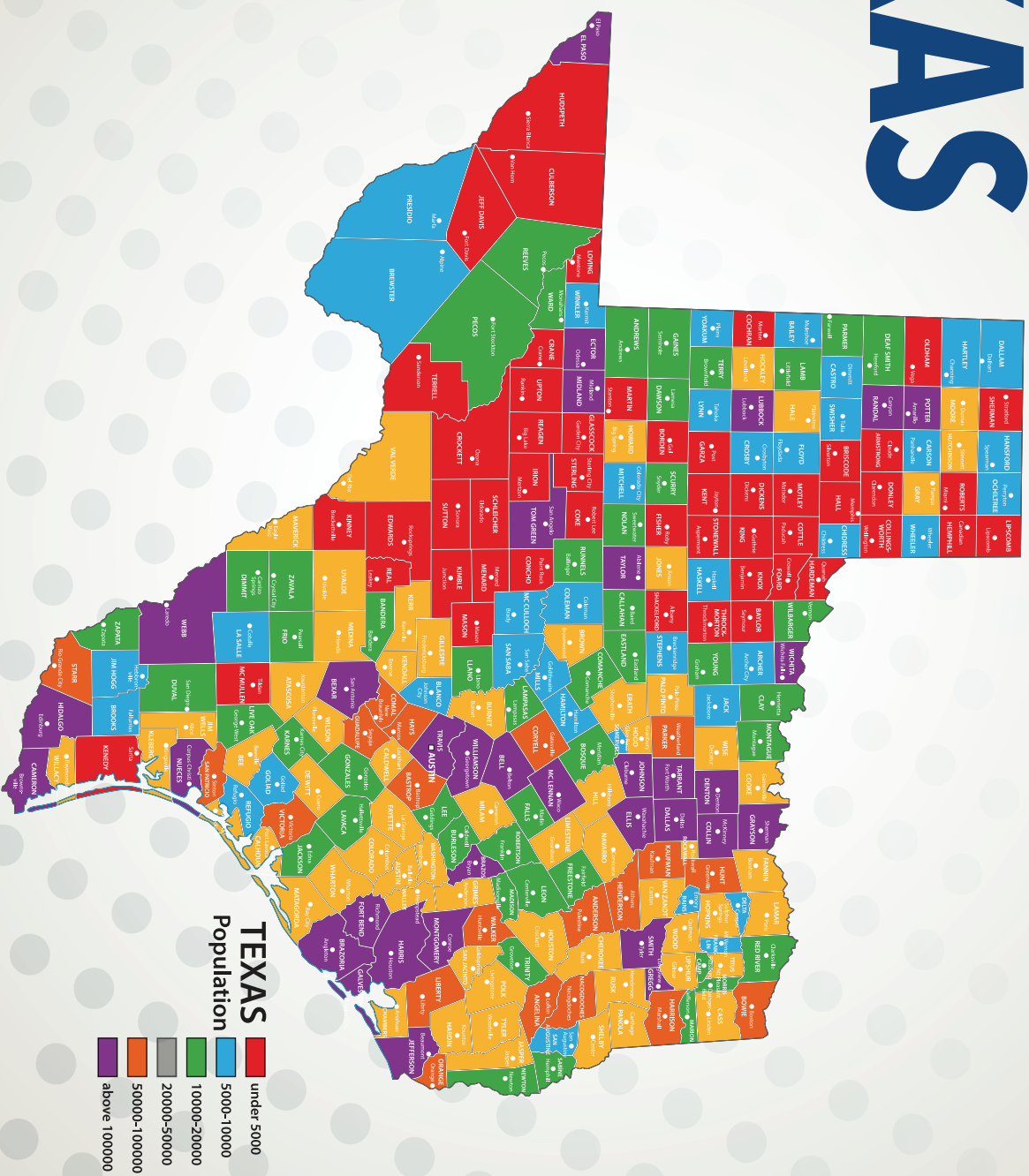
*We want to tell others  
about Jesus.*

**SEE JOHN 4:2**





# TEXAS



PRAY FOR

MEXICO





MATCH AND REMEMBER CARDS







BANK WRAP



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING  
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS

WMU of Texas

DIMES AND DOLLARS  
for Missions

