

Preschool Study Guide

Introduction

Learning Objective

Preschoolers will learn about how the money they give to the Mary Hill Davis Offering® for Texas Missions helps people in cowboy churches learn about Jesus at the arena events.

Background Information

When the first cowboy churches were started in Texas, their goal was to reach people in the cowboy culture who did not know Christ and might not feel comfortable in a traditional church building. As a result, with Texas Baptists as ministry partners, Western Heritage Ministries was born.

Over the last twenty years, this movement has spread across the state starting almost 200 cowboy churches. The country and western style of music and wearing boots, hats, and jeans has created a comfortable atmosphere for this unreached people group. The barriers they faced in traditional churches are removed. If they feel inclined to give an offering, an envelope in the worship guide or a boot at the rear of the Sunday Gathering place is available. Should one request baptism, it is often in a horse trough. Attendance is growing and new churches continue to be started. People feel at home, accept Jesus, learn how to be more like Him, and begin to live a life of serving others.

One distinctive characteristic of a cowboy church is the Arena/Outreach Ministry. The arena might be compared to the gym or fellowship hall in a traditional church. The Arena/Outreach Ministry helps reach people that might not come to church on Sunday. The people are comfortable competing in or watching the events and are more likely to attend an event than to come to a Sunday Gathering. Arena/Outreach events enable cowboy churches to share the gospel with those in their community who may never hear another way. The members and regular attendees in the cowboy church are involved in serving through Arena/Outreach events.

These events are unique to each cowboy church. They are scheduled throughout the year to meet the needs of each community. Some cowboy churches have their own arena event and others partner with a nearby church to reach people in both communities. The type of event is determined by each church and may be on a large or small scale. An arena event could include a rodeo with any number of competitive events for many ages and skill levels or it could be a fall gathering with praise bands, barbecue, and stick horse races.

The arena event is made possible in many cowboy churches through the Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions. It provides an opportunity for people to hear the gospel message.

Preparation

The Learning Environment

Create an arena by clearing a large space in the center of the room, placing furniture against the walls. Display items relating to Western Heritage throughout the area (boots, cowboy hats, bandanas, rope, blankets, saddle, etc.). Print a variety of pictures showing rodeo events and animals such as cows, horses, and sheep and attach them to walls around the room. (Internet)

Designate four areas in different parts of the room for small group rotation learning experiences. Label the areas as follows: Cowboy Hat Toss, Boot Bank, Chuckwagon, and Corral.

RESOURCES:

- ☐ Bible Thought bookmarks
 - ☐ Boot outline
 - ☐ Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions logo labels
 - ☐ Two pictures of an arena event at the Coastal Bend Cowboy Church
-

Schedule for a One-Hour Session

- Whole Group Learning - 10 minutes
- Interest Areas - 10 minutes each
- Whole Group Learning - 10 minutes

Mission Study

Welcome

In advance, provide a bandana for each child. Print two pictures of arenas. (Internet)

Welcome children and direct them to be seated on the floor in the middle of the room (the arena). Tie a bandana on each child. Draw their attention to the pictures, western items, and the four different areas set up in the room. Explain that the room is set up to be our arena.

Share that in Texas, there are churches called cowboy churches. These churches do things differently to make cowboys and cowgirls feel comfortable when they come. For instance, you might go to church on your horse instead of in a car. When you give your offering you might drop your money into a cowboy boot as you leave instead of an offering plate. You would probably wear your jeans, boots, cowboy hat, and a bandana when you go to church. The music is country and western and uses guitars and fiddles instead of a piano and organ.

Cowboy churches have a big building called an arena. (Show the arena pictures.) Many events take place in the arena that people enjoy doing or watching. There is always a time during the arena activities when the people learn about Jesus. Many people at the arena events do not go to church anywhere. Many do not know anything about Jesus. When they are having fun in

the arena and hear about Jesus, they want to know more about Him. They will go to the cowboy church where they are comfortable and know they can learn about Jesus.

(Point to each area as it is explained.) Say:

In the Corral, you will have fun with barrel racing and hearing music that cowboy churches use. At the Boot Bank you will get to color a boot and make a bank to collect money to help people learn about Jesus. You will make a yummy snack treat at the Chuckwagon. And you can test your tossing skills at the Cowboy Hat Toss.

Interest Areas

In advance, print the four bookmarks with Bible Thoughts and cut apart. (Resources)

Chuckwagon

(Homeliving – Trail Mix)

- **GATHER:** Crunchy, sweet, and salty food items, (may include the following: cereal, pretzels, cheese crackers, nuts, dried fruit, popcorn, miniature marshmallows, chocolate chips, colorful M&M's), large plastic bowls (one for each item selected), small scoop (one for each bowl), quart-size plastic zip bag (one per child), plastic hand gloves, picture of a cowboy chuckwagon from

the Internet, Bible Thought bookmark, and a Bible. (Base food selection on known food allergies.)

- **DO:** Pour selected food items into the bowls and place on a table with bags, gloves, and scoops. Mark 1 Corinthians 3:9 in the Bible. Print the chuckwagon picture.
- **TEACH:** Display the chuckwagon picture and explain that it is a wagon used for carrying things needed to cook and eat while the cowboys are working outside. Share that when people come to the arena event they get hungry and need a snack. Explain that each child will fill his own snack bag with Trail Mix. Point out what each bowl contains. Guide them to put on the gloves and take a plastic bag. Allow them to put only one scoopful of each item they choose into their bag. As they sample the snack, open the Bible and read the thought, *We work together.*

Say:

We can work together to help cowboy churches have arena events.

Corral

(Music and Movement – Stick Horse Barrel Racing)

- **GATHER:** CD of country and western gospel music, CD player, stick horses (purchased or DIY), two cones (the barrels), painter's tape, picture of barrel racing from the Internet, Bible Thought

bookmark, and a Bible.

- **DO:** Place the stick horses against the wall (in the corral), the cones in a straight line 6-8 feet apart, tape a line three feet from closest cone (start/finish line), mark 2 Timothy 1:3 in the Bible, print the barrel racing picture, and load the CD player.

TEACH:

Say:

People enjoy watching and participating in barrel racing in the arena.

Show the picture and walk to demonstrate how to do a barrel race. Stand on the tape line. Walk to the first cone and pass closely around it on the right. Continue walking toward the second cone and pass closely around it on the left. Walk straight back and cross the tape line.

Say:

We can listen to the kind of music people in cowboy churches like while each of you barrel race.

Turn on the CD and direct each child, one at a time, to experience barrel racing. Each child will choose a horse from the corral, stand on the tape line, and walk through the barrel race when commanded to start. Allow a second turn and gallop through the race. After all have had a second turn, open the Bible and read the thought, *I thank God.*

Say:

I thank God that people can come to the arena, have fun, and learn about Jesus.

Cowboy Hat Toss

(Manipulatives)

- **GATHER:** A cowboy hat, three beanbags, painter's tape, Bible Thought bookmark, and a Bible.
- **DO:** Place the cowboy hat upside down on the floor. Attach a strip of tape to the floor 3-4 feet from the cowboy hat. Place the beanbags on the tape line. Mark Acts 4:20 in the Bible.

TEACH:

Say:

When people go to the arena, they enjoy a challenge to use their skills.

Instruct children to take turns standing on the tape line and tossing one beanbag at a time into the hat. Allow each child to have at least two turns to toss. Open the Bible and read the thought, *We want to tell people about Jesus.*

Say:

We can tell people about Jesus when they come to the arena.

Bible, boot outline, Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions logo labels. (Resources)

- **DO:** In advance, print the boot outlines (one per child) on cardstock and cut them out. Print the logo labels. Mark Hebrews 13:16 in the Bible. Complete a sample bank by coloring the boot, attaching the logo onto the boot, and taping the boot to the cup.
- **TEACH:** Show the picture of Mary Hill Davis. Share information about her and the offering. Read the Bible Thought, *Do not forget to do good and share with others.* Show the sample boot bank. Explain that each one will make a bank to collect money (Boot Bucks) for the offering.

Say:

This is a way we can do good and share with others so cowboy churches can have arena events where they learn about Jesus.

Guide each child to complete his bank. Encourage children to earn their Boot Bucks by helping at home.

Boot Bank

(Art)

- **GATHER:** Picture and information about Mary Hill Davis and the offering (iamtexasmissions.org), crayons, painter's tape, 12-14 oz. plastic cup (one per child), Bible Thought bookmark,

Whole Group Conclusion

In advance, print the pictures of the Ranch Rodeo arena event of the Coastal Bend Cowboy Fellowship. (Resources)

Invite all children to be seated on the floor in the middle of the room (the arena). Guide

children to focus on each interest area and take turns telling what they learned.

Show the pictures of the Coastal Bend Cowboy Fellowship at the Ranch Rodeo event in Kingsville, Texas. Share that over 500 people came to the arena to watch or compete. During the event the pastor told the people about Jesus. A mother and her daughter asked Jesus to forgive their sins

and take charge of their lives. They became Christians that day.

PRAY: Thank God for the cowboy churches and their arena events so people can learn about Jesus and decide to accept and follow Him. Thank God that we can give our offering and help the cowboy churches have arena events.

About the Writers



DeRema Dunn

DeRema Dunn is a member of Inspiration Church in Mesquite. She is a former leader of Mission Friends and is a writer of preschool missions resources. She is actively involved in missions outreach through numerous opportunities with her Life Group. She enjoys her retirement from elementary school teaching and getting to know her first great granddaughter.



Mary Hill Davis

Mary Hill Davis, president of Texas WMU from 1906 to 1931, saw Texas as a rich harvest field with its mixture of Anglo, Black, European, and Mexican populations. In 1910 she led the Baptist women of Texas to set aside a week to pray for the needs in the state and to take up an offering as was done for foreign and home missions. Following her death in 1934, the Texas missions offering was named in her memory.

Bible Thought Bookmarks

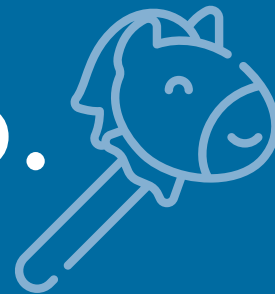


WE WORK TOGETHER.

– 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

I THANK GOD.

– 2 TIMOTHY 1:3

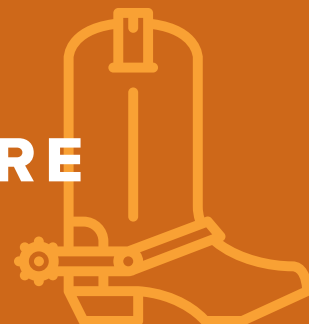


**WE WANT TO TELL
PEOPLE ABOUT JESUS.**

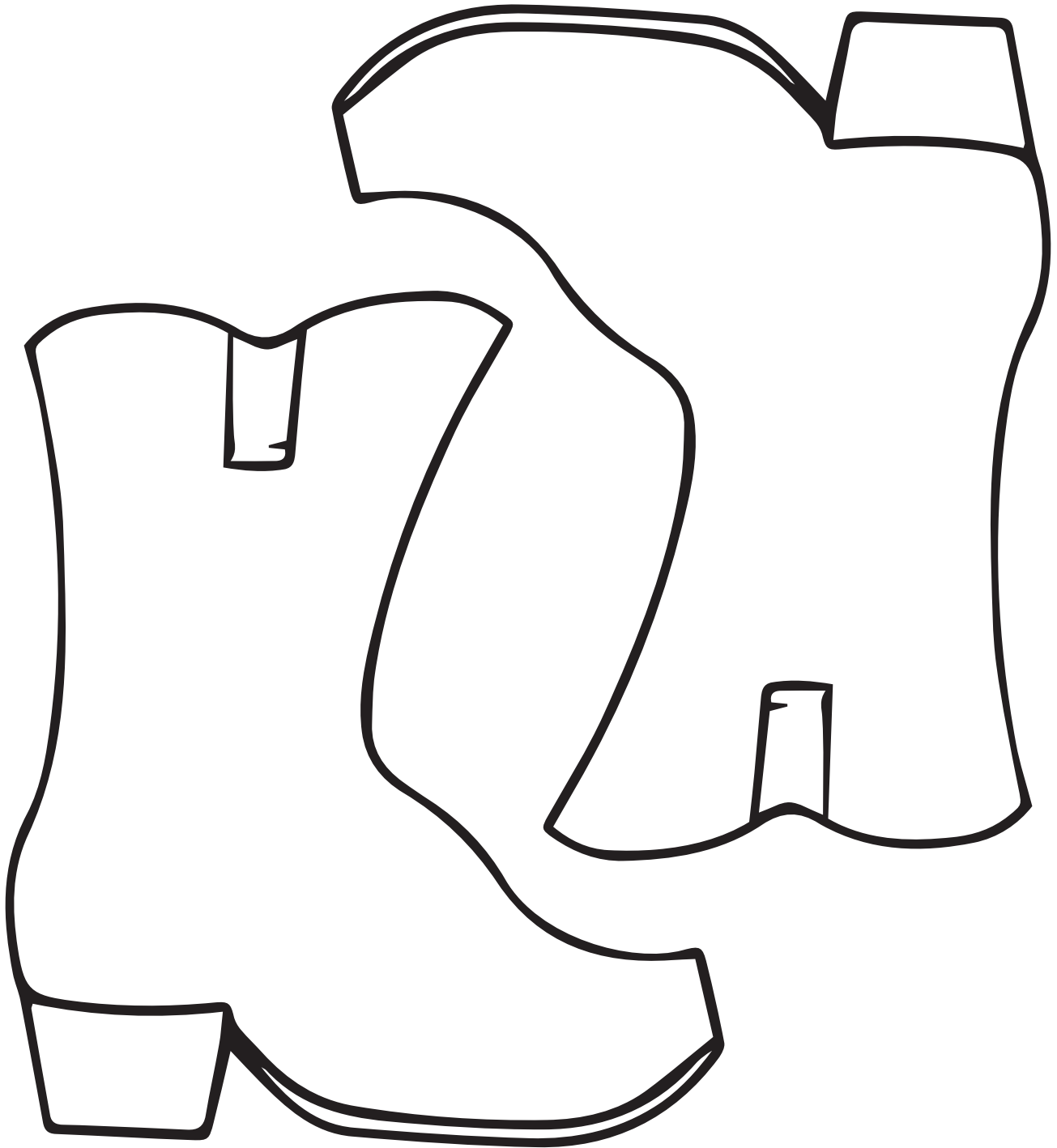
– 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9

**DO NOT FORGET TO
DO GOOD AND SHARE
WITH OTHERS.**

– 1 CORINTHIANS 3:9



Boot Outline



MHDO Logo Labels



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas



MARY HILL DAVIS OFFERING
FOR TEXAS MISSIONS®
WMU of Texas

Arena Event Image 1



Arena Event Image 2

