

MISSION EXPLORERS KENYA, LESSON FIVE

Spirit of the Masai Mara, Rift Valley Academy

SAFARI FACTS

MASAI MARA, KENYA



FACTS ABOUT THE MASAI MARA

Established in 1961 as a wildlife sanctuary, Masai Mara is located on the Kenyan border next to the Serengeti National Park in Tanzania. The famous annual Great Migration of wildebeests, Thomson’s gazelles, and zebras goes right through this 580 square mile/1502 square kilometer game reserve. Spirit of the Masai Mara luxury resort is located at its edge.

KIJABE, KENYA



FACTS ABOUT KIJABE

Kijabe is a town in central Kenya located on the edge of the Great Rift Valley. It is the home of Rift Valley Academy which was built there in 1909 as a school for the children of missionaries working in Africa.

Lesson Purpose: To emphasize the importance of continued spiritual growth after salvation.

Lesson Objectives:

- To teach children what is meant by the phrase “a greenhouse for missionaries.”
- To help them have an awareness of some of the sacrifices missionaries and their families make, specifically parents and children living apart from one another.
- To teach them how to grow into strong, healthy Christians by, first, being saved and then studying God’s Word and praying without ceasing.
- To help them consider ways to love and encourage others.

VIDEO INTRODUCTION

Jesse continues his adventures in Kenya with a visit to the luxury resort of Spirit of the Masai Mara, which overlooks the Masai Mara National Reserve on the Kenya/Tanzania border. He meets Julia Tatton, who runs the resort and employs many Kenyans there. Tourism is one of the main ways that Kenyans earn a living. Jobs at Spirit of the Masai Mara include safari guides, cooks, servers, and housekeepers. Julia hires many Masai people but says that in order to work at the resort, they must get an education first – a new concept to many of the Masai tribe. Julia also does something unusual in Kenya by employing women as guides. Jesse observes many animals on the reserve as his guide Dominic tells him about each one. The evening ends with traditional Masai dancing around a fire, and Jesse even joins in.

Jesse’s next stop is Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya. RVA was started by missionaries over 100 years ago so that missionary kids could receive a good education and live close to their parents ministering in Africa instead of living far away in their home countries. There are 500 students from 30 different countries at any given time. Jesse meets Jeff Davis, whose great grandfather started Kijabe Hospital, which we learned about in Lesson 4. Because many of their parents are ministering in other countries in Africa, about half of the students live on campus. The school provides an excellent, well-rounded education as well as a wonderful sense of family and Christian community.

PLAY VIDEO NOW (18:38)

STOP 1

Lesson Objective: To teach children what is meant by the phrase “a greenhouse for missionaries” by making their own mini-greenhouses to take home. The phrase “greenhouse for missionaries” is discussed in STOP 2.

Materials needed: Clear plastic cups (2 per child), potting soil, seeds or dry beans, tape



Greenhouse just planted



Greenhouse after 5 days

Do you know what a greenhouse is? It is a building where plants grow. It is usually made of glass or has many large windows. The temperature inside the greenhouse is just right for growing plants. Inside the greenhouse the plants get exactly the right amount of water. Conditions are perfect for plants to thrive. Sometimes seeds are started in a greenhouse. When they break through the soil and a tiny plant has formed, then they can be planted in the ground outside the greenhouse.

We are going to make a mini-greenhouse for you to take home.

Give each child 2 clear plastic cups. Spoon about 2-3 inches of soil into each cup. Give everyone a couple of seeds to push into the soil about an inch. Give the seed enough water to thoroughly moisten the soil. Punch 3 holes into the other cup. Turn the cup with the holes upside down on top of the cup with the soil and seeds. Use tape to secure the two cups together.

Caring for the greenhouse: If the soil is thoroughly moistened, it is not necessary to water the greenhouse. In a few days, the seed or bean will sprout. When that happens, the top cup can be taken off and the plant watered as needed. When it reaches the top of the bottom cup, it can be planted outside if desired.

STOP 2

Lesson Objective: To help children have an awareness of some of the sacrifices missionaries and their families make, specifically parents and children living apart from one another.

Materials needed: a world map or globe

In the video, Jesse visited Rift Valley Academy (RVA). More than 100 years ago, this school was started by missionaries who wanted the children of missionaries to get a good education and live close to their parents. A long time ago when missionaries would leave their home country and go far away to work in Africa, their kids would have to go to school in their home country. These families didn't get to see each other very often.

Can you imagine living in one country while your parents worked in another country? *(To help the children visualize the distance, use a globe or a map to show where Africa is. Then show different countries from where missionaries may come to work in Africa.)* It would be difficult to live so far away from one another, wouldn't it?

Missionaries make a lot of sacrifices to take the gospel to people who have never heard about Jesus. Rift Valley Academy makes it easier for missionaries and their children to see each other more often. About half the students at RVA live with their parents so they get to see them every day when they go home from school. However, the other half of the students live at school. Their parents work in other parts of Africa where there aren't good schools for them. They live at RVA and go to school there, too. Even though they live away from their parents, they are much closer than if they had stayed in their home countries.

Did you hear in the video what they said people call RVA? It has been called "a greenhouse for missionaries." How could a school be a greenhouse? Do they plant "missionary seeds" in soil and wait for little missionaries to sprout? Remember what we learned about greenhouses for plants? Inside a greenhouse conditions are perfect for plants to grow. Plants need light, food, and air to grow. Greenhouses provide all of these in perfect quantities so that plants grow strong and healthy. In the same way, RVA provides its students with the things that grow strong and healthy missionaries. They don't just teach the students math and English and history. They also teach them the Bible so that they will know how to follow Christ and how to lead others to follow Christ.

STOP 3

Lesson Objective: To teach children how to grow into strong, healthy Christians by, first, being saved and then studying God's Word and praying without ceasing.

How many of you would like to be a baby forever? How many of you would rather grow big and strong and become a grown-up than remain a baby? What are some things that are helping you grow? *(Let them answer with things such as eating healthy food, taking vitamins, drinking milk, getting exercise, etc.)* That's right! It is important that you take care of your body so that you will grow into a healthy adult.

Living a healthy lifestyle is important to physical health. But did you know that it is just as important to be spiritually healthy? You need to have a healthy spiritual lifestyle, too. Let's look at some things that can help us be spiritually healthy. We are kind of like plants. Light, food, and air are good for us, too.

Read John 8:12:

“Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” (NKJV)

Jesus says the He is the light of the world. Many times the Bible compares a person’s life before being saved to being in darkness. Living a life of sin without Jesus is like living in darkness. When a person is saved through faith in Jesus Christ, Jesus is like a giant light bulb that shines in the darkness. When a room is dark and you turn a light on, what happens to the dark? It goes away! Jesus shines His grace and mercy into your life when you get saved. And He keeps shining His light into your life to help you grow in the grace in which you were saved. God has the best plan for your life. He wants you to experience the fullness of his grace. He wants to pour his abundant life into your life. Are you ready?

So, the first thing you need to grow spiritually healthy is the light of Jesus in your life. You need to be saved by faith in Jesus Christ. Then He shines His light into your life so you can shine His light into the darkness of this world. Apart from Christ, this world is a dark place without hope.

Something else that plants need to grow is water. Water is food for plants. Without food, a plant will die. We need water and food to live, too. We also need spiritual food to be spiritually healthy.

Read 1 Peter 2:2:

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,” (NKJV)

This verse says that the Word of God, the Bible, is like food. Just like babies need milk to grow, we need the Word of God to grow. That is why it is so important to study the Bible and memorize Scripture. As you learn God’s Word, you learn what He wants you to do and how He wants you to live. You grow stronger and stronger in your faith.

Not only is the Word of God like milk, but it is also like solid food.

Read Hebrews 5:13-14:

“For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (NKJV)

As babies grow, they begin to eat solid food, don’t they? There are things in the Bible that are like milk because baby Christians can understand them. There are also things in the Bible that are hard to understand. It takes a lot of time and study to understand some of the deeper teachings of the Bible. These are the things that are like solid food.

If you are a Christian, you should always be growing and learning. You should not be satisfied with simple milk. You should want solid food, too. You should be hungry to study God's Word more and more.

Another thing that plants need to grow is air. People need air, too. We have to have oxygen to breathe or we will die. We also need spiritual air to be spiritually healthy. What is spiritual air? Communicating with God is like spiritual oxygen to our Christian life. One of the main ways we communicate with God is through prayer.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17:

"Pray without ceasing," (NKJV)

"Without ceasing" means not to stop. This verse is telling us that we need to pray without stopping. Does that mean that we should be on our knees praying every minute all day long? No, that wouldn't be possible, would it? God wouldn't tell us to do that if it were impossible. God is telling us that we should pray frequently and regularly. We can't pray every minute, but we can pray throughout the day.

Prayer is an important way that we communicate with God. Communication with God is just as important to your spiritual life as oxygen is to your physical life.

Accepting the light of the gospel of Jesus, eating the food of God's Word and breathing the oxygen of communicating with God through prayer will help you grow into a strong and healthy Christian.

FINAL DESTINATION

Lesson Objective: To help children consider ways to love and encourage others.

In the video, the question was asked, "What is your favorite thing about Rift Valley Academy?" Do you remember how most of them answered? They said that their favorite thing about RVA was the sense of community and team work. The students and the teachers at RVA all work together to help each other learn and grow and do God's work.

This is how God wants all of us to live. We have learned that God wants us to grow into strong, healthy Christians. He also wants us to live in unity with other Christians and work together to serve Him. He wants us to help one another and encourage one another.

Read Hebrews 10:24-25:

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.” (NKJV)

This verse teaches us that we should think about how we can encourage other Christians to love people and to do good things for God. It also teaches that we need to meet together with other Christians regularly. We come to church because God says in the Bible that we need each other.

Let’s encourage one another to love people and do good things for God. What are some things we could do to show people that we love them? What are some things we could do for God? (Help them think of some practical ways to love and serve.)

Go over the Memory Verse:

1 Peter 2:2:

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,” (NKJV)

MINISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

Rift Valley Academy
rva.org

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

FLAGS OF THE WORLD BINGO

Materials needed: beans or uncooked macaroni for placing on the bingo cards; Flags of the World bingo cards (These are available to print online for free from many websites including these:

<https://www.adventure-in-a-box.com/product/flag-bingo-free-printable-sample/>

<http://www.suitcasesandsippycups.com/2011/05/printable-flags-of-the-world-bingo.html>

Remind the class: At Rift Valley Academy, students come from as many as 30 different countries. The country with the most students is the United States. The country with the second most students is Korea.

When we saw kids eating their lunch in the cafeteria, did you notice all of the different flags hanging up on the walls? These represent the home countries of the students. Let's play a game with flags from other countries.

Play as many rounds of Flags of the World Bingo as you have time for. Younger children may have difficulty distinguishing the flags in the game of bingo. If you think this may be the case with your class, you may also cut them apart to create a matching game.



Flags of the World Matching Game

LETTERS TO PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS

A great way to show God's love and give encouragement at the same time is to write a letter to a persecuted Christian. It is very encouraging to them to know that there are people who love them and know about the things they are going through. Have the children fill in the blanks and then draw a picture on the back of the letter. Go to <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/letters>.

There you will find:

- *a free letter-writing guide*
- *a free letter template that can be downloaded and printed*
- *specific people to whom you may write*
- *the address where to send your letters.*

Dear Parent,

Today we continued on our safari to Kenya! Today we learned:

- what is meant by the phrase “a greenhouse for missionaries” and we made greenhouses
- about some of the sacrifices missionaries and their families make, specifically parents and children living apart from one another
- how to grow into strong, healthy Christians by, first, being saved and then studying God’s Word and praying without ceasing
- ways to love and encourage others
- the Swahili word for school (shule).

This week’s Memory Verse is 1 Peter 2:2:

“As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby,” (NKJV)

This week’s ministry is Rift Valley Academy. Find out more about their work at rva.org.

Caring for the greenhouse: If the soil is thoroughly moistened, it is not necessary to water the greenhouse. In a few days, the seed or bean will sprout. When that happens, the top cup can be taken off and the plant watered as needed. When it reaches the top of the bottom cup, it can be planted outside if desired.

Mission Explorers Kenya is produced by KidsTalkAboutGod.org, which provides lots of opportunities for kids to have a real voice in sharing the gospel around the world. To find out about upcoming opportunities for children, sign up for the newsletter at KidsTalkAboutGod.org/news.

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