

MISSION EXPLORERS KENYA, LESSON SIX

Straight Up Missions, Masai culture

SAFARI FACTS

KENYA



MASAI MARA NATIONAL RESERVE, KENYA



Masai Mara National Reserve is a large, protected game reserve in southwestern Kenya. It connects at the Kenyan border with the Serengeti National Park on the Tanzanian border. It is the home of many African animals and is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Kenya. Sekenani is the name of one of the entrances to the reserve and is also the name of a nearby village.

Location: Rift Valley Province, Kenya

Elevation: 4875 to 7052 feet/1485 to 2149 meters

Size: 938 square miles/2429 square kilometers

Lesson Purpose: To give children a realistic picture of the work and life of a missionary.

Lesson Objectives:

- To show children that missionaries do many jobs in addition to building churches and sharing the gospel.
 - To help children understand that Christians should have a desire to see all people saved because God does not want anyone to perish, and to motivate them to share the gospel wherever they are.
 - To show children the biblical mandate to care for widows and orphans.
 - To encourage them to think of practical ways to put their faith into action.
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VIDEO INTRODUCTION

Jesse's next adventure takes him to Mara Christian Academy in Sekenani, Kenya, where he meets the Sawyer family. Travis is a missionary who started Straight Up Missions and built the school where local Masai children attend. Straight Up Missions also includes a church and a children's home. They plan to build a medical clinic soon with the help of people from Kijabe Hospital which we learned about in Lesson 4. Jesse meets Travis' wife Laura and their four daughters – Sarah, Summer, Savannah, and Skylar. The Sawyers have one purpose for being in Sekenani: to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesse tries his hand at some of the many jobs that Travis must do to keep the school, the children's home, and his own home running in this remote African village.

Jesse visits the Mara Children's Home where he meets Jeri, who lives at the home and takes care of the children. Many of the children are at the home because their parents have either died or cannot take care of them. In addition to caring for orphans, Straight Up Missions cares for widows. Every Wednesday they feed them a meal, and Jesse took the opportunity to help serve.

Jesse also meets Tom, a young Masai chief, who gave Travis one of his most prized possessions – a stick that is a symbol of his authority as a tribal leader. Tom says he gave Travis the stick because of everything that he does for his Masai community.

Jesse learns how to build a traditional Masai dwelling. They use sticks covered in a mixture of mud and dung with special rooms for goats and cows. Jesse gets to participate in this messy – and smelly! – project. A Masai woman says that Jesse is the first white person that she has ever seen do this.

PLAY VIDEO NOW (19:10)

STOP 1

Lesson Objective: To show children that missionaries do many jobs in addition to building churches and sharing the gospel.

Materials needed: pictures printed from the internet of traditional “missionary jobs” such as building a church, preaching, teaching in a school; pictures of a person welding, gathering eggs, and other jobs the Sawyer family is seen doing in the video

When you think of a missionary, what do you think that means? What kind of jobs do you think a missionary does? (*Show the pictures as you discuss each job.*) Most of the time we think of a missionary as someone who tells people about God or who teaches people the Bible. We might think of someone who builds churches. Yes, a missionary does tell people about God and teach them the Bible and build churches. But missionaries do lots of other jobs, too.

In the video we met Travis Sawyer and his family. What are some of the jobs you saw them doing? (*Answers may include building a school, creating a library, building a playground, building a medical clinic.*) Yes, Travis does those things as well as tells people about God and teaches people the Bible. But he also does some jobs that you might not realize a missionary does.

Did you see him changing the oil in the vehicles they use? Why is that important? Because they use all of those vehicles in their ministry. They need to keep them running smoothly and changing the oil frequently is part of that.

Did you see Travis showing Jesse how to weld? What would a missionary use this skill for? Travis used it to build playground equipment! I’m sure he also uses his welding skills to repair all sorts of metal things that break. They make as many things as possible out of metal, even houses. In Africa, if you have a house made out of wood, the termites will eat it up!

Did you see his daughter gathering eggs and feeding the chickens? Why would a missionary have chickens to take care of? They need them for food. They don’t have grocery stores right around the corner like we do. They have to grow a lot of their own food. (*Be sure to discuss any other jobs they may have noticed on the video and why a missionary would need to do that job.*)

Being a missionary isn’t just about preaching God’s Word, is it? All of those different jobs are what it takes for Travis and his family to run a ministry in Sekenani, Kenya. Being a missionary is a lot of hard work. But every job is important!

STOP 2

Lesson Objective: To help children understand that Christians should have a desire to see all people saved because God does not want anyone to perish, and to motivate them to share the gospel wherever they are.

Materials needed: A piece of plain white paper

We talked about the different jobs that Travis and his family do. But do you know why they went to Sekenani, Kenya, as missionaries? Travis said that everything they do is for one purpose: to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Why do they want to share the gospel with people in Kenya?

Read 2 Peter 3:9:

“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” (NKJV)

The Bible says that God does not want anyone to perish or spend eternity separated from Him forever. Repentance is changing your mind about God. Perhaps you thought you could work your way to heaven because you didn't sin as much as other people. Then, you hear the good news of the gospel that Jesus died for your sins and rose from the grave to conquer death. You hear the message that God loves you and wants to give you eternal life as a free gift. You repent or change your mind about God. You place your trust in Jesus alone, not your good works. That's repentance!

Read Acts 20:21:

“testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” (NKJV)

God wants everyone to repent, believe in Jesus and be saved. If God wants that, then we should want that, too. God uses people like the Sawyer family to tell other people about the good news of the gospel of Jesus. All of their jobs serve one purpose and that is to tell others about Jesus.

We have read this verse before, but let's read it again.

Read Matthew 28:19-20:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.” (NKJV)

In this verse, Jesus is speaking to His disciples or followers. That means He is speaking to anyone who follows Him – whether they lived a long time ago or now. That means that if you are saved, then He is speaking to you, too!

Jesus wants you to tell everyone you meet about Him. He wants you to tell everyone that salvation is in Christ alone through faith alone. Travis and his family tell the people of Sekenani about Jesus because that is where God sent them. God might send you and your family to a faraway country, but He might not. He wants you to tell people about Him wherever you are – in a distant country like Kenya or India or right here in _____ (name of your city) _____.

A great way to do that is the paper-folding evangelism tool we learned how to do in Lesson 2. Let's practice that again right now.

Directions for the Paper-Folding Evangelistic Tool are found at the end of Lesson 2. Demonstrate for the children. If you have time, give each of them a piece of paper and let them take turns doing it in front of the class.

STOP 3

Lesson Objective: To show children the biblical mandate to care for widows and orphans.

Materials needed: Construction paper, stickers, markers, and various card-making supplies

In the video we saw Jesse at Mara Children's Home, which is a place that takes care of orphans. An orphan is a child who doesn't have parents to take care of him. Travis and his family started Mara Children's Home to give orphans a place where they can be loved and cared for. They provide the children with a place to live, food, clothes, and an education.

The Sawyer family also cares for widows. A widow is a woman whose husband has died. We saw Jesse help serve a meal to widows and orphans, which they do every week.

Do you know why the Sawyer family ministers to orphans and widows?

Read James 1:27:

"Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit widows and orphans in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world." (NKJV)

The Bible teaches that it is very important for Christians to take care of widows and orphans. God knows that life is often hard for these women and children who don't have families to take care of them. Many times they are lonely and need people to show the love of God to them.

That's what they do at Straight Up Missions. That is why they provide food, clothing, and education for orphans and feed widows every week. They want to obey God by taking care of widows and orphans.

Did you know that there are probably women in your own church who are widows, whose husbands have died? Let's show them that God loves them and so do we. We are going to make cards to give to them. You can write a Bible verse inside your card or you can draw a picture – whatever you would like to do to let them know that they are not forgotten.

Pass out the card-making supplies. When they are completed, ask your family pastor for names of widows in your church or a local nursing home to whom the cards can be mailed or distributed. We recommend that you, the teacher, keep the cards and make sure they are delivered to the proper place.

FINAL DESTINATION

Lesson Objective: To encourage children to think of practical ways to put their faith into action.

What if it were very cold outside and you saw a man shivering and trying to get warm because he had no coat, and you said to him, "Be warm!" Would that help him? No, that wouldn't help him. What would help him? A coat is what he needs. What if you saw a little girl who was very hungry, and you said to her, "Be full!" Would that help her? No, it wouldn't. What does she need? She needs food to eat.

Our words don't help people unless we back them up with action. The Bible talks about this.

Read James 2:15-17:

"If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (NKJV)

In these verses God is talking to people who say that they are Christians. They say that they are saved because they have faith in Jesus Christ. If a Christian sees someone that doesn't have clothes to wear or food to eat, and just says to them, "Be warm! Be filled!" that does not do any good. Faith without works is like words without action – useless!

There are many Christians who are not exercising their faith by doing the good works that God wants them to do. They are like people who eat a lot and never exercise. They are alive, but they are not strong. Being alive is good but being alive and physically strong is even better. Being saved is great but being saved and doing good works for God is even better. Another

word for “useless” is unproductive. God wants all believers to be productive in representing him and his coming kingdom during their short lifetimes. The grace that you received when you accepted the gift of God’s everlasting life is the same grace he wants you to show and share with people who don’t know God’s love. God wants to love them through you!

Putting their faith into action is what the Sawyer family is doing with Straight Up Missions, Mara Christian Academy, and Mara Children’s Home. They aren’t just talking about helping widows and orphans. They are actually doing something about it.

That is why we made cards to give to widows. Instead of just saying we care about them, we made beautiful cards to give them to show that we care. Let’s think of some other ways that we can put our faith into action. *Let the children think of ways that they can put their faith into action. Below is a list of helpful suggestions.*

- *Plan a trip to a local nursing home to sing songs, recite Bible verses, or simply visit with the residents. The children can pass out pictures that they have colored.*
- *Encourage the children to do an extra chore at home that their parents did not ask them to do.*
- *Do some yard work for a neighbor.*
- *Read a book to your little brother or sister.*
- *Write a thank you note to your pastor telling him how much you appreciate everything he does.*
- *Bake cookies and take them to the local police station. Include a note thanking them for keeping your city safe.*
- *Take a basket of fruit or small dollar store gifts to someone who is sick.*

This week put your faith into action by doing something kind for someone. If you have faith, then God says you need to show it by action. If you have faith but never do anything to show it, then God says your faith is dead. Who wants dead faith? Not me! Dead does not mean your faith doesn’t exist. It means your faith is unproductive. If I have a fruit tree in my yard, I want it to produce fruit. If it doesn’t produce fruit, it’s dead or unproductive.

Go over the Memory Verse:

James 2:17:

“Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.” (NKJV)

When you believe in Jesus Christ as your savior, you are born again into God’s family. Faith is like the hand of the beggar reaching out to receive a gift. In this case, the gift is eternal life. You can’t lose something that is forever. If you could lose it, it would not be “eternal” life. It would be temporary life.

However, the only way people can see your invisible faith is by your actions and words. If you help people in need, people will wonder why you're taking time to help them. This will often give you an opportunity to share with them the good news of the gospel. Your invisible faith will become visible to either Christians in need or unbelievers in need who need to hear the gospel of grace.

MINISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

Straight Up Missions
straightupmissions.com

Dear Parent,

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

- that missionaries do many jobs in addition to building churches and sharing the gospel
- that Christians should have a desire to see all people saved because God does not want anyone to perish and wants us to share the gospel wherever we are
- the Bible says we are to care for widows and orphans
- practical ways to put our faith into action
- the Swahili word for welcome (karibu).

This week's Memory Verse is James 2:17:

"Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead." (NKJV)

This week's ministry is Straight Up Missions. Find out more about their work at straightupmissions.com.

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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