

KICKstart

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Making Sense of M&S

by Connie McNamara

A children's program using the five senses

A S A CHURCH, WE NEED TO HELP our younger generation understand what Mission and Service is, why it is important, and how they can help. Remember, one day in the not-too-distant future, it will be them sitting around a table deciding what the Mission and Service objective should be for the year!

OBJECTIVE

Children need to have all of their senses engaged to stay focused on the topic and to ensure they absorb the maximum level of information.

This two-hour session will provide children from eight to 12 with an explanation of what Mission and Service is and why it is essential, as well as an indelible memory of how the Mission and Service Fund helps our partners. It will do this by immersing participants in an experience of sight, sound, taste, touch, and movement.

One-hour option: If you have less time, do the Welcome, What Is the M&S Fund?, Introduce a Partner, and the Wrap-Up, which will take about 45 minutes. Choose only *one* option from Seeing, Hearing, Touching, Moving, or Tasting to bring the project into clearer focus.

PREPARATION

1. Choose one or two examples of partners that the Mission and Service Fund supports, and do your research on them. Ideally, choose one global partner and one Canadian partner; if the Canadian partner has

a local connection, so much the better (see “Choosing a Partner” on page 21).

2. Choose a location for your workshop that has a high-speed Internet connection, or if not, download the necessary video(s) either directly to a laptop, or onto a DVD. Obtain a laptop computer, a digital projector, and a large screen (which can be simply a tablecloth, a sheet, or a bare wall). You will need this to show videos. Choose a YouTube video (see “Using Videos” on page 21). Find a globe or map to show the country or province where the partner is. Locate a keyboard or a guitar and someone to play.
3. Choose a song, a simple craft, a game or dance, and a food that relate to the region where the partner works, or to M&S (see “Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food” on page 22). Find or purchase any supplies necessary.
4. Ensure there are enough adult helpers to facilitate a fun learning experience for the children.
5. Think of ideas for a follow-up activity for participants (see “Plan a Follow-up Activity” on page 22).
6. Advertise the date, time, and location of your workshop using your church bulletin, website, and posters. Choosing a project(s) and finding a related song, craft, game or dance, and food may sound like daunting tasks, but it will not take long to do. As a benefit, you too will learn something, and it will allow you to truly make a personal connection to M&S.

The Workshop



ARRIVE EARLY ENOUGH to get everything organized and set up. Provide a seating area (chairs, mats, or pillows) for watching the videos. Arrange tables and chairs on which to do the craft, and distribute the necessary supplies and instructions on the tables. Identify a space for the game or dance; outside is great if it is a nice day. Locate a place to wash hands before snack time.

You may want to provide name tags for the children and adult helpers if they are not already well known to each other.

WELCOME (5 minutes)

Welcome children as they arrive, give out name tags if required, and make any necessary introductions. Explain that the next two hours will be jam-packed with fun as you learn about the Mission and Service Fund of The United Church of Canada by looking at one (or two) partners that the M&S Fund supports.

WHAT IS MISSION AND SERVICE? (10 minutes)

Ask participants if they know what Mission and Service is. You might get some interesting answers! Supplement their responses with this explanation:

Mission and Service is the special way we in the United Church show God's love to people in other countries and to people in Canada. The M&S Fund is where we put all of our gifts of money so that we can work together to be God's presence in the world.

Mission and Service helps ministers and churches. It helps men, women, and children in Canada and around the world. We give M&S money to 249 partners working in health care and education, as well as reducing poverty and caring for the environment. We put our money together into one big pot—the Mission and Service Fund—to support all this work.

Show the YouTube video *M&S 101*, which features Moderator Mardi Tindal. Find it at youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada. (Look for it in the playlist “Minutes for Mission.”)

INTRODUCE A PARTNER (10 minutes)

Explain the name, location, and type of partner you will be learning about in the workshop. Use a globe or map to locate

the country or province. You might want to ask participants to try and locate it first, then help if needed. Speak for a minute or two about the place—its history, climate, economy, education system, anything that they might find interesting. Talk about the work of the partner.

You may show pictures you have found while doing your research or perhaps even items that come from that country or province that you are able to obtain from museums, libraries, or people you know.

SEEING (15 minutes)

Show a video or two or three, depending on your timing and the children's interest.

Following the viewing, ask the following questions:

- What was the most interesting or exciting thing you saw in the video?
- Did you learn anything new as you watched?
- What did you learn about the Mission and Service Fund?

HEARING (10 minutes)

Get the children on their feet and put their voices to good use by singing a song. See “Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food” on page 22 for help finding a song. Be sure to give the children actions to do with their hands or feet as they sing. Go over the song several times until they know it quite well.

TOUCHING (20 minutes)

It's craft time! See “Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food” on page 22 for craft ideas. Assemble the children at the tables, organizing them so that older children are seated next to younger ones who may need a bit of extra help. Give a brief explanation of what the craft is and why it relates to the country or province of your partner(s). Lead the children through making the craft, then put the crafts aside until it is time to go home.

MOVING (15 minutes)

After sitting and working with great concentration on the craft, the children will need to get moving again. It's time to learn either a dance or a game that is native to the country or

province of the partner, or that represents the sharing that is such a big part of M&S. See “Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food” on page 22 for more information on finding a dance or a game, and remember, this can be done inside or outside.

TASTING (15 minutes)

It’s time now to sit and have a drink and a bite of food that ties in to the M&S partner you’re learning about (see “Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food” on page 22 for ideas). First have children wash their hands, then offer a brief explanation of why you have chosen the particular food(s) they will be trying.

WRAP-UP (20 minutes)

It’s time to reiterate! Give a very brief overview by asking questions:

- What is Mission and Service? What United Church partners did we learn about today?
- What did you see today? What did you hear? What did you touch? How did you move? What did you taste?

- What was your favourite part? What did you learn today?
- Finally, introduce the ongoing part of the workshop. Explain that to truly make M&S our own, we need to be part of it too. We need to not just learn about M&S, but also to support it. The best way to do this is to take part in a project that will raise money for the work of M&S. Explain the options for a fundraising project, and let the children help you to choose what you will take on (see “Planning a Follow-up Activity” on page 22).

Thank them for coming to the workshop and set up a date to get together to either continue planning your fundraising project, or to put it into motion. Don’t forget to send their crafts home with them if possible.

The Rev. Connie McNamara of Three Harbours Pastoral Charge in Wallace, Nova Scotia, is a preacher, partner, parent, participator, and procrastinator whose motto is “the answer is yes, now let’s make it happen.”

CHOOSING A PARTNER

THIS WORKSHOP WILL WORK BEST if you truly make it your own by choosing a United Church partner (or partners) that reflects a particular interest of your own local church mission, that ties in to a timely media topic, or that you feel will connect with the children.

This issue of *Mandate* is full of information about partners supported by Mission and Service. You can also find information about partners in the *Minutes for Mission* booklet or online at united-church.ca/sales/publications/minutes. Short videos about partners are available on the United Church’s YouTube channel, youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada. Look for the playlist “Minutes for Mission.”

The Internet is a valuable resource for your research. Start with a look at the United Church website, united-church.ca, where you can search for M&S information. You can also do an Internet search for a word or a phrase that relates to the partner you’ve chosen. Some partners have their own websites.

The Internet is also a good resource to help you learn about the location of the partner you choose, and the songs, crafts, foods, and games or dances that are popular there.

USING VIDEOS

HELPING CHILDREN TO SEE THINGS FOR THEMSELVES is an amazing way of connecting them to any topic. The United Church of Canada provides many YouTube videos online about partners in Canada and overseas at youtube.com/unitedchurchofcanada. The video clips are varied in style and topic, and are usually short, interesting, and often contain music. You may well find a video that portrays the partner(s) you have chosen, but if your partner is not among the videos on YouTube, don’t hesitate to show a video or two of other partners that might be similar in focus.

AVEL, the United Church’s audio-visual lending library, is another source for videos. It has four outlets. To contact the one nearest you, visit united-church.ca/contact/avel. Ask the consultant for suggestions. You may need to show a clip of a longer video.



Farmers in Mozambique register to receive seeds from the Christian Council of Mozambique.

Songs, Crafts, Games, Dances, Food

YOU WILL NEED TO FIND songs, crafts, games, dances, and food that are relevant to the location of the partner you choose.

SONGS

Choose a song that is catchy and quick to learn, and that either is representative of the country or province where the partner is located, or that speaks to what we do when we support Mission and Service.

Finding a short, upbeat song that children will find themselves singing afterward is a great way to “make it their own,” and provides an opening to explain Mission and Service work to others. Find a song that relates to the place where the M&S partner(s) you have chosen is located. Don’t be afraid to try singing in a different language—just have it printed phonetically to help you.

Both *Voices United* and *More Voices* hymn books contain songs from other countries. If you can’t find one from the region of the partner you have chosen, learn a song or even a chorus that speaks to the attitude of the service and generosity that is the Mission and Service Fund. For example, try the chorus of *Voices United* #468, “Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ” or *Voices United* #509, “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky” or *More Voices* #191, “What Can I Do?” or the chorus of *More Voices* #209, “Go, Make a Diff’rence.”

CRAFTS

Choose a simple craft that relates to the area in which your partner is located and that can be done by children in a 20-minute timeframe. Children are never happier than when they can have their hands in something—painting, building, and creating! As you research the country or province of origin of your M&S partner, find a craft idea or two that can be easily made with items that can be purchased in your local area.

If you are having difficulty finding something, consider making an art project that will highlight Mission and

Service. For example, try painting the M&S logo using finger paints in the appropriate colours (red, orange, yellow, green, blue), or making a mural that can be displayed in church depicting the many ways in which M&S dollars work at home and abroad. In most cases, making a craft that the children can take home at the end of the workshop will help them retain what they have learned.

DANCES OR GAMES

Children are active and need the opportunity to let off a little steam even as they learn. Find a dance or a game that pertains to the country or province where your chosen M&S partner is located, and teach it to the children. Dancing and playing outdoors is a great way to change things up, as well as a wonderful way to get some fresh air and enjoy God’s beautiful creation, if the weather cooperates.

If you cannot find a dance or game that reflects your partner, try a scavenger hunt using items of significance to your topic. Another option is a game that relates generally to M&S, for example, a bucket race using a wet towel to fill the bucket might allow them to learn about the water conservation and protection that M&S assists with in many places, or an egg-on-a-spoon race might help them to know the kind of gentle, non-threatening care that M&S provides for people and places in need.

FOOD

Note: It’s important to be aware of food allergies.

Research the fruits or vegetables that are native to the country or province you are highlighting with your M&S partner. Perhaps you can serve them raw with a dip. If that is not a viable option, seek out recipes that come from the country or province and make a dish or two to share. If none of this seems appropriate, make a simple recipe together as a group to symbolize the benefits of working together.

PLAN A FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

THE WORKSHOP WILL HELP CHILDREN CONNECT WITH MISSION AND SERVICE, but ongoing and consistent encouragement and empowerment will put this connection over the top! Come up with some simple ideas that workshop participants might be able to do in your location to raise funds for Mission and Service.

Find some ideas before the workshop, but be sure to allow the children to have a voice in deciding which venture to do. Some suggestions include a tea social after church, a yard sale one Saturday morning, a penny jar at the back of the church, a chili luncheon with prizes for the spiciest, a car wash, or making and selling bead bracelets.

Planning to do their own project to support M&S will enable the children to use what they have learned, to take on a challenge, and to be responsible for really making it their own!