

Children and Mission

I'm concerned. Our children's lives are full of sports and music and other activities that demand their time – way beyond the school day. Sometimes Sunday School or church or UMYF get blocked out because a coach or sports program has scheduled games the same time as church.

What are you doing to make your children or the children in your church aware of mission – to enable them to be involved in mission outreach? What does a child know? What can a child do? Plenty – if given half a chance!

Sunday School

There are 4 or 5 months every year that have five Sundays in them. Consider making that fifth Sunday a mission Sunday. Challenge every Sunday School class (adult, youth, and children) to focus on mission. There are great mission resources every year for children at the Cooperative School of Christian Mission. Get those resources, involve creative teachers and “go to town!”



Last month Christ UMC, Bethel Park, "immersed" itself in Imagine No Malaria and The Nyadire Connection in Zimbabwe. All groups and ages got involved. The children in the above picture are in a Sunday school class writing letters to orphans at the Home of Hope. Those letters are being delivered in Nyadire right now by a VIM team of four volunteers.

The Imagine No Malaria web site has free downloadable lessons for children's SS classes: <http://www.imagenomalaria.org/resources/church-resources/>. Lessons feature a Bible story, Bible and mission activities, and ways for children to respond.

VIM for Youth in Western Pennsylvania



Teen-agers (grades 9-12) and “tweeners” (grades 6-8) participate in hands-on mission project in July with Mission Discovery and Mission Adventure during the Cooperative School of Christian Mission at Grove City College, and Uth4Mission at the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. They build handicap ramps, harvest food from Boaz Fields, work in food banks, assist with Vacation Bible Schools in small churches, and do minor construction and repair work for needy families.

School of Mission for Children

Children at the School of Mission this year will hear age appropriate lessons about mission in Haiti and support a mission project with their offerings. The older children often get special lessons from the adult hands-on mission project coordinator. In the past one of those children, Denise Nicole, learned how to sew simple clothes for children in hot weather climates, took the project home and got it started with the women of Greenock UMC.

VIM for Youth with VIM teams

Team leaders who attend VIM Leader Training events learn of project sites across the US that are family friendly ([Family Opportunities](#)) or welcome youth. They are reminded of safeguards that should be in place for teams which incorporate youth – safe sanctuary guidelines, tool safety and job site safety reminders, VIM insurance, etc. – and the ways that teams are blessed when youth are present. VIM Training is strongly encouraged for individuals who work with youth and want to provide safe, meaningful hands-on mission experiences. VIM Training Registration: [2011 VIM Training Registration](#).

Confirmation Classes

February, March, and April confirmation classes have been coming to the Conference Center for “tours.” (<http://www.wpaumc.org/pages/detail/1920>). On any of those days you might encounter 60-100 young people (usually grades 6-8). Once here, they are divided into groups of 20-25 and move about to different “stations.” I am privileged to run the **Mission/VIM** station. When they are with me, they become VIM teams – learning about kit ministry and making birthing kits. I always finish those days energized and encouraged. How exciting to connect with young people who demonstrate enthusiasm and leave this place more aware and committed to mission!

Share the Wealth

There are many gifted Sunday School and Vacation Bible School teachers who have been melding their passion for mission and their love of children for years. If you have children’s sermons, Sunday School lessons, or Vacation Bible School units that help children connect with mission, please write them up and share them with me. I’ll put a link on the VIM webpage so that others can benefit from your experience.