



FREE TO BE

Children's Ministry Curriculum
and Resources about our History and Identity as
the Free Methodist Church

This curriculum is designed for Free Methodist churches to use to teach children what it means to be a Christian in the Free Methodist Church. Each lesson focuses on one aspect of our denomination's identity and history. These four lessons could be used for a 4-8 week focused time of teaching, as stand-alone lessons, or to supplement any curriculum or event. (For example, you may choose to use Lesson 2 (Free to be Equal) on Freedom Sunday.) We also tried to jam pack these lessons with lots of ideas for you to use any time throughout the year to create opportunities for your children and their families to engage in learning and serving.

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All Scriptures quoted are NIV 2011, unless otherwise noted.

JESUS CALLS US TO BE HIS HANDS AND FEET.

Key Lesson Element: *Stories of Contemporary Free Methodists*

Core Scriptures: *Philippians 2:1-11; Micah 6:8*

Suggested Lesson Plan

We have intentionally provided multiple activity options. Choose whichever you think will work best for your time, space, and students' learning styles.

Elements that we think are essential to this lesson are marked with an asterisk.

- **Choose one or two intro activity options.**
- **Read and engage children in the stories of Elisha from Togo, Manny from Mexico, and a person from your church.**
- **Discuss questions as a large group or in smaller groups.**
- **Choose one or more activities.**
- **Be sure to send home take-home materials.**

Suggested Supplies

Intro Activities

- **Hands Game:** *table, chair, and items, such as pudding cup and spoon, hair brush/comb, makeup, toothbrush and toothpaste*
- **Need to Serve:** *long spoon (this could be made by taping several plastic spoons together, or several plastic knives as the handle and one spoon on the end)*
- **Mini Marshmallows and Ice:** *mini marshmallows, ice cube*

Stories of Contemporary Free Methodists:

Pictures available in Additional Resources folder

Bible Time: *Bibles or printouts of the Bible passages*

Activity Options

- **Spidergram:** *whiteboard (or posterboard) and markers*
- **Pebble Object Lesson:** *whiteboard (or posterboard) and markers*
- **Make paper bead bracelets:** *colorful card stock paper, scissors, chunky knitting needle or dowel, paintbrush, Mod Podge, yarn*
- **Service Calendars:** *see Take Home Paper*
- **Serve your Church:** *Supplies will vary depending on service project. See lesson for ideas.*

Take Home Papers and prizes for Bingo winners

FREE TO SERVE

Intro Activities

**Choose one or more intro activities that will engage your students.*

- **Hands Game** (10 minutes)

Choose two volunteers. Person A will stand in front of a table with their arms at their side. The other person (Person B) will stand behind Person A with their arms reaching out to the front. The person in the back (who can't see what is in front of their partner on the table) will have to be the hands for Person A. Challenge the pair of volunteers to complete various tasks, such as eat a cup of pudding, brush or comb their hair, put makeup on, or brush their teeth.

Say: In our game, Person A was the hands for Person B. Did you know that as Christians, we are called to be the hand and feet of Jesus? What do you think that means?

Explain to the kids that we love and serve others because God first loved us. We love and serve God and others as a response.

- **Need to Serve** (5 minutes)

Have a child volunteer to demonstrate the need for service. Give them a very long spoon, and tell them that they must eat something using the spoon. (Note: This spoon should be longer than the student's arm. If you don't have a spoon long enough make one by taping plastic knives together with a plastic spoon on the end to form a long handled spoon.) Now, if you choose a very clever student, they will probably find a way to feed themselves. But otherwise, they will need to ask someone to help them.

Say: We all need help sometimes! We all must serve others all the time.

- **Mini Marshmallows** and Ice (3 minutes)

Ask for a volunteer. Have them eat a mini marshmallow. It tastes sweet! Now have them hold an ice cube in their mouth as long as they can stand it. As soon as they spit it out, have them put a mini marshmallow in their mouth. You can't taste it.

Say: Sometimes, we get so focused on thinking about our own needs that we become numb to the needs of others.

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*Contemporary Stories of Free Methodists (10-15 minutes)

Say: The first Free Methodists had a book that told people what they believed and how they wanted to act as a church. This was called their Book of Discipline. Their first Book of Discipline written in 1866 said this: "All their churches are required to be as free as the grace they preach. They believe that their mission is two-fold — to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity and to preach the gospel to the poor." In other words, the first Free Methodists thought that they had two jobs to do as Christians: to follow Jesus like the Bible told them to, and to tell the poor the Good News of Jesus. They knew that you couldn't follow Jesus if you didn't love and serve other people. This is what it means to be the hands and feet of Jesus! To love and serve other people, just like Jesus did. Today we are going to share with you a few stories of Free Methodists from around the world who know just how important it is to serve others in Jesus' name.

Read one or both of the following stories and share a story of someone in your church.

Elisha from Togo

You don't have to be an adult to love and serve people in God's name! Our first story is about a young woman from Togo (a country in Africa) named Elisha (pronounced Elēsha). Elisha is being used by the Lord to bring relief to mothers and children in the Adidogome neighborhood of Lomé.

At church, Elisha noticed that many of the younger children were usually crying and disturbing their mothers because they were hungry. She was often asking her father, Rev. Dosseh Takpale (the national church leader of Togo), about this situation ... giving him no peace ... wondering if something could be done to help. Her father said yes, he could help HER do something, but not on their own. Rev. Dosseh encouraged Elisha to write a letter about her concern for these hungry children and give it to people both in and outside the church, sharing her vision.



Elisha did that and people began to give money to help her prepare food for the children every Sunday. That was over a year ago ... and Elisha is still preparing food for the children. With the help of Cecille and Christel, two women from the church, each week the 20-plus children are usually served rice with either chicken, fish or beans. Or, they may enjoy their more traditional food of Akume (made from corn paste) and fish.

Elisha shares her reason for this ministry: "I love kids and often I see children crying because they are hungry. For that reason, they disturb parents during worship time. Also, it is a way to bring unbelieving children into the church. I want to give a chance for poor children to enjoy good food, too."

Elisha hopes to be able to keep this ministry going for as long as the Lord provides. And her vision includes that when these children grow up and become parents, they too will support this kind of ministry. Yes, Elisha is caring for the children. And inspiring all of us. May the Lord bless the work of her hands and use this ministry to bring other children into the kingdom of God.

This story was first published in the Free Methodist Curriculum Missions Alive! Study of West Africa 2015-16. Check out other stories like this under Childrens Resources at fmcusa.org/fmmissions.

Manny from Mexico

Hear Manny share his own story of coming to know Jesus as His Savior and His immediate desire to share His faith and serve others in His family, church, community, and around the world.

"I met Jesus when I was 17 years old after having spent my teenage years searching for meaning and purpose in my life. I got involved with the wrong friends. Things got so bad I dropped out of school because of my negative attitudes. This was hard for my parents. Then I met some amazing people who introduced me to Jesus. One of these friends was named Leonardo, a friend I had known in my childhood who had moved away. He returned to Nogales to go to high school. I'll never forget going to a little corner store where Leonardo and the store owner, Virna, would talk to me about Jesus. When I went to buy things at the store, they took time out to talk and minister to me, but I didn't want to hear about going to church. One day Virna invited me to a youth event another church group had organized, and I decided to go. I never imagined that that night I would come to know Jesus as I listened to the worship music with the kids dancing and singing. I remember someone asked if anyone wanted to receive Jesus in their heart, and I was sure at that moment that I did. The other kids gathered around me and prayed for me, and I felt the presence of God as I never had before. I had never understood the depth of God's love, that He sent His son to die for my sins. Through His blood He forgives us and cleanses our hearts and we experience salvation.



After that night I wanted to share with everyone what had happened to me. The next day was Sunday and I got up early, excited because it would be the first Sunday I would go to church, the Free Methodist Church, Manantial de Vida (Spring of Life). It was then a small building made of plywood sheets, with lots of people crowded inside.

Over time God kept showering blessings on my life. I met with the other youth group kids, studied the Bible, enjoyed fun times and they invited me to be part of the music team. I had always enjoyed music, especially rap music, but I never imagined how amazing it would be to be part of a group that sings praises to God.

Last year I went on my first mission trip with our church to the Yucatan Peninsula, to the city of Campeche, where we worked in construction and children's ministries. It was hard work, but we saw God give us strength to complete the work He gave us there. My parents have not made a decision to follow Jesus yet, but they are glad for the changes in my life. I finished my university degree and work in a factory. My brother also came to know Jesus and is a growing Christian. I especially thank God for the people who took time to share the gospel with me. If you're reading this I urge you to seek God's face every day, because God has great things in store for your life. And take time to listen to people who are searching for something to fill the emptiness in their lives, and tell them what Jesus has done for you!"

This story was first published in the Free Methodist Curriculum Missions Alive! Study of Caribbean, Central America, Mexico 2014-15. Check out other stories like this under Childrens Resources at fmcusa.org/fmmissions.

From your church

For this third story, use an example from your own church. Who is someone that saw a need and decided to serve? This could be a pastor or a layperson, contemporary or from your church's history.

***Bible Time & Discussion Questions** (5-10 minutes)

As a large group or in your small groups, discuss these questions after reading one or both stories.

1. Define service.
2. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How should we treat each other? What did Jesus do?
3. Read Micah 6:8. What does God expect from us? How can we do these 3 things?
4. Brainstorm what the needs are in your own community. How can you meet this need?
5. Who do we know that we can serve? Who do we cross paths with on a daily basis?

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8**Activity Options**

Choose one or more activities that will engage your students

- **Spidergram** (5 minutes)

Do a spidergram with the word “serve” on a flipchart/whiteboard. Ask the kids to think of examples of serving others.

- **Pebble object lesson** (5-10 minutes)

Draw 5 rings of service diagram in concentric circles on whiteboard, big enough for all the kids to see. Write the following words, beginning in the inner ring and working outward: God, Family & friends, Church family, Community, and World. Drop a pebble into a tub of water and let the kids see the ripples that the pebble creates. Explain to the kids that when we serve someone we don't always see all the results. We might help someone load groceries into their car thinking that we just helped that one person. But we never know how our acts of service can have a bigger effect. God is doing a BIG work in the world, and we get to play a part in that big work. Our service has a ripple effect, just like a pebble in water. *(See Additional Resources folder)*

- **Make paper bead bracelets** (20-25 minutes)

Make paper beads from colored paper or magazines and string them together to create bracelets, key chains, or necklaces. Paper bead kits can be purchased online or at your local hobby store. You can also find instructions online. Talk to your kids about how Free Methodist ministries, such as SEED, are using jewelry making to bring families out of poverty.

- **Service Calendars** (10-15 minutes)

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Have your kids pair up or get in small groups to create service calendars for a week or a whole month on the back of their Take Home Paper. Come up with one thing they can do every day to serve someone. Encourage them to think of things to serve people inside and outside their immediate family.

- **Serve your church!**

Take time during worship or during your normal kids ministry meeting time to serve others in your church! This can be a part of your normal lesson, or you can devote an entire hour/block of time and do a Day or Night of Service.

A few service project ideas: wash car windows in the parking lot, serve snacks to the pre-schoolers, pick up trash on the playground, wipe down kitchen counters or tables in fellowship hall, serve as Sunday morning greeters (say hello to visitors, help walk new people to where they need to go, etc.), bake or decorate cookies for sick/shut-in members of your church, make bags of trail mix to give away, etc.

Additional Resources

- ICCM: www.childcareministries.org
- SEED: www.shopseedmarket.org
- SET FREE: www.setfreemovement.com
- Eden Reforestation: www.edenprojects.org
- Missions Alive! Curriculum: Childrens Resources at fmcusa.org/fmmissions

Event Ideas

Engage your entire church family or community through one or more of these ideas.

- **Hold a fundraiser** to raise money and community awareness for a ministry your church is passionate about, such as a 5K run, Ants-in-your-pants-athon (danceathon), or bake sale.
- **Hold a Service Fair for families** to come and learn more about FM world ministries like ICCM, Seed, FM World Missions, Set Free, and Eden Reforestation, as well as local service organizations in your community/church (church food pantry, local homeless shelter, etc.).
- **Invite an ICCM Ambassador** to speak at your church for a Sunday morning or another day of the week. Have kids and parents consider sponsoring a child from another country.
- If you do this lesson close to Christmas, your church can sign up for some **Salvation Army bell ringing** shifts near you. Then, have families sign up for 30 minute shifts.
 - Have families sign up to **deliver flowers to shut-ins** or people in nursing homes that are connected to your church.
 - **Collect items** for your local homeless shelter or food pantry.

Meet Elisha from Togo

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"All their churches are required to be as free as the grace they preach. They believe that their missions is two-fold--to maintain the Bible standard of Christianity--and to preach the Gospel to the poor." 1866 Free Methodist Book of Discipline

Discussion Questions from today's lesson

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2. Read Philippians 2:1-11. How should we treat each other? What did Jesus do?
3. Read Micah 6:8. What does God expect from us? How can we do these 3 things?
4. Brainstorm what the needs are in your own community. How can you meet this need?
5. Who do we know that we can serve? Who do we cross paths with on a daily basis?
6. How can we serve people that live far away?

SERVICE CALENDAR
