

Homeschool Missions Curriculum Guide

Free Lesson Plans, Unit Studies & Activities
for Grades K-12

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The kitchen table was covered in flour. Maria, eleven years old and homeschooled in rural Tennessee, was kneading a ball of dough with both hands while her mother read aloud from a biography of Lottie Moon, the tiny, fierce Southern Baptist missionary who spent nearly forty years in Tengchow, China, living in a gray brick house with a courtyard, eating Chinese food with chopsticks, and arguing with her own missions board when they tried to tell her what women could and couldn't do. Maria's hands were sticky. The dough was supposed to become Chinese steamed buns, mantou, and it wasn't cooperating.

"She weighed ninety pounds," Maria's mother read. "She was barely five feet tall."

Maria looked down at the dough. She was already taller than Lottie Moon.

That morning, Maria had labeled the Shandong province on a blank map of China, calculated the distance from Tengchow to Richmond in miles and kilometers, read a psalm in the King James Version that Lottie would have known by heart, and written a journal entry from the perspective of a Chinese girl meeting a foreign woman for the first time. Now she was making bread.

She had covered geography, math, language arts, history, creative writing, and home economics before lunch. All of it flowed from a single story. All of it pointed toward a single truth: God's heart for the nations is not a sidebar in the curriculum. It is the curriculum.

Why Missions Belongs in Your Homeschool

Homeschooling families have an advantage that no institutional school can match: the freedom to build an entire education around a unified vision. If your family believes that God is on mission to redeem people from every nation, tribe, people, and language, and if you believe that your children are part of that mission right now, not someday, then missions is not an add-on. It is the thread that ties everything together.

Consider what a single unreached people group can teach:

- **Geography:** Where do they live? What is the terrain? What is the climate? What crops grow there? Where are they on the map relative to your home?
- **History:** How did their nation form? What empires ruled them? What colonial powers shaped their borders? When did missionaries first arrive, or why haven't they?
- **Language arts:** What language do they speak? What does their writing system look like? Can your child learn to write "hello" in their script? Can she write a letter to a missionary working among them?
- **Science:** What animals live in their ecosystem? What plants do they cultivate? What diseases are prevalent? What does the night sky look like from their latitude?
- **Math:** What currency do they use? What is the exchange rate? If a Bible translation costs \$35 per verse and the New Testament has 7,957 verses, how much does a full New Testament translation cost?
- **Art:** What are their traditional visual art forms? What colors do they use? What patterns? Can your child replicate a Berber geometric tile design or a Japanese sumi-e ink painting?
- **Music:** What instruments do they play? What scales do they use? Can your family listen to a recording of their worship music, or their traditional folk songs, and describe what they hear?

One people group. Seven subjects. A full week of school.

That is not a stretch. That is how knowledge actually works, interconnected, layered, and rooted in the real world rather than chopped into artificial compartments.

Integrating Missions Across Subjects

Geography and Missions

Geography without people is just geology. The power of geography in a homeschool missions curriculum is that it puts a face on every landform, a family in every climate zone, and a prayer need on every continent.

Start with a wall map. Not a digital one, a physical paper map that your children can touch, draw on, and pin things to. Over the course of a school year, that map will become a record of your family's growing awareness of the world. Every people group you study gets a pin. Every missionary you pray for gets a flag. Every country you cook a meal from gets a colored dot.

For a complete geography-missions unit with printable maps and activities, see [Missions Through Geography](#).

Here are three ways to weave missions into geography lessons:

1. Replace country studies with people group studies. Instead of "We're studying India this week," try "We're studying the Bhil people of western India, 21 million people who live in the forested hills of Rajasthan and Gujarat, who paint their mud-walled houses with intricate geometric murals during festivals, who ferment a drink from the mahua flower that tastes like honey and earth, and among whom the church is growing rapidly after centuries of being ignored by both Hindu society and foreign missionaries." The shift from nation to people group gives children a human-scale entry point into a continent-scale reality.

2. Use latitude and longitude as prayer coordinates. When your child learns to read coordinates, give her the coordinates of an unreached community and have her find it on the map. Then pray for the people who live at those coordinates. Math becomes intercession.

3. Trace missionary routes. Plot the journey of Adoniram Judson from Massachusetts to Burma, across the Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope, through the Indian Ocean, and calculate the distance. Compare it to a modern flight. Talk about what six months on a wooden sailing ship would have been like: the creak of ropes, the smell of salt and tar and unwashed bodies, the relentless rolling of the sea, the months of seeing nothing but water in every direction.

History and Missions

The history of missions is the history of the world, it is just the version that doesn't usually make it into the textbooks.

When you study the Roman Empire, tell your children that the roads Rome built to move its legions were the same roads Paul walked to carry the gospel from Jerusalem to Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome itself. When you study the Age of Exploration, tell them that alongside the conquest and exploitation (which must be taught honestly), there were Jesuit missionaries in China who learned Mandarin, dressed in the robes of Confucian scholars, and won the respect of the imperial court through their knowledge of astronomy and mathematics. When you study the colonization of Africa, tell them about Samuel Ajayi Crowther, a Yoruba man who was captured by slave traders as a boy, freed by the British Navy, educated in Sierra Leone, and eventually became the first African Anglican bishop, translating the Bible into Yoruba and Igbo.

History comes alive when it has faces.

For every era you study, ask: where was the church? Who was carrying the gospel? Where did it take root, and where was it rejected? What did missionaries get right, and what did they get wrong?

That last question matters. Honest missions history includes the failures, the missionaries who confused Western culture with the gospel, who allied themselves with colonial powers, who dismissed indigenous knowledge and art. Children can handle this complexity. They need it. A sanitized history produces a brittle faith; an honest history produces a resilient one.

Language Arts and Missions

The natural pairing of missions and language arts is biography. Missionary biographies are among the best-written, most gripping nonfiction available for children, because the lives themselves are gripping.

Build a biography rotation into your reading schedule. One missionary biography per month, selected by age level:

Early readers (ages 6-8):

- Picture book biographies of Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, Corrie ten Boom, and Gladys Aylward. These are short enough to read in one sitting and vivid enough to generate conversation that lasts all week.

Independent readers (ages 9-12):

- The "Christian Heroes: Then & Now" series by Janet and Geoff Benge. Over forty titles, each one a full-length narrative biography. Highlights: Jim Elliot (Ecuador, the jungle, the Waodani people, the spears on the riverbank), Ida Scudder (India, a doctor who built the largest hospital in Asia because three women died in one night when no male doctor would treat them), and Lottie Moon (China, see the opening of this article).
- For more recommendations organized by age, see Missions Books for Kids.

Advanced readers (ages 13+):

- Elisabeth Elliot's *Through Gates of Splendor* and *Shadow of the Almighty*. Don Richardson's *Peace Child* (the story of finding a redemptive analogy among the Sawi people of Papua, a culture where treachery was the highest virtue, until a missionary discovered that the one act their culture considered inviolable was the exchange of a peace child between warring villages, and realized that God had already planted the concept of His own Peace Child in their cultural soil). Brother Andrew's *God's Smuggler*.

Beyond biography, language arts integration includes:

- **Journal writing from perspective.** Have your child write a diary entry as a missionary arriving in a new country for the first time. What do they see? What do they smell? What are they afraid of?
- **Letter writing.** Write real letters to real missionary families. This teaches formal letter structure, empathy, and the discipline of thinking about someone else's life. For guidance, see *Missions Journaling for Kids*.
- **Vocabulary study.** Learn ten words in the language of the people group you're studying. Practice pronunciation. Notice how different languages organize the world differently, some languages have no word for "lonely" because the concept of being truly alone is unthinkable in their culture.

Science and Missions

Missionary work has always intersected with science. William Carey was a world-class botanist. David Livingstone mapped rivers and documented African ecology. Cameron Townsend founded Wycliffe Bible Translators after realizing that linguistic science, the systematic study of how languages work, was essential to Bible translation.

Build science connections into your missions studies:

- **Ecology:** Study the biome where your featured people group lives. What animals share their land? A unit on the Maasai leads naturally into the ecology of the East African savanna, lions, zebras, acacia trees, the annual wildebeest migration. A unit on Amazonian tribal peoples leads to rainforest ecology, the canopy layers, the river dolphins, the medicinal plants that indigenous communities have catalogued for centuries.

- **Medicine:** Many missionaries have been doctors and nurses. Study tropical diseases (malaria, dengue, cholera) in the context of missionary medical work. Discuss clean water access and basic sanitation, science with a purpose.
- **Linguistics:** For older students, introduce the basics of linguistics. How do you write down a language that has never been written? How do you identify the phonemes, the distinct sounds, of an unfamiliar language? This is real science, and it is happening right now in translation teams around the world.

Grade-Level Approaches

Grades K-2: The World Is Big, and God Made All of It

At this level, keep it sensory and simple. A kindergartner's missions curriculum should feel like an adventure, not a lesson.

Weekly rhythm:

- Monday: Locate a new country on the globe. Color it on a blank map.
- Tuesday: Listen to music from that country. Try to clap the rhythm.
- Wednesday: Cook or taste a food from that country. Talk about what grows there.
- Thursday: Hear a short missionary story. Draw a picture of what you heard.
- Friday: Pray for one specific thing about the people you learned about.

That is missions curriculum. Five days. Fifteen minutes each. No workbook required.

Grades 3-5: The World Is Full of People Groups, and Many Haven't Heard

This is the age to introduce the concept of people groups, the 10/40 Window, and the idea that some communities have no Bible in their heart language.

Weekly rhythm:

- Monday: Read a people group profile. Find their location on a map. Record three facts in a missions journal.
- Tuesday: Read a chapter from a missionary biography.
- Wednesday: Hands-on activity, cook a food, make a craft, write a letter, or learn five words in a new language.
- Thursday: Study a science or geography topic connected to the people group (climate, animals, plants, terrain).
- Friday: Pray specifically for the people group. Write the prayer in a journal.

For printable materials to support this rhythm, see [Printable Missions Lesson Plans](#).

Grades 6-8: The World Is Complex, and So Is the Gospel's Advance

Middle schoolers are ready for nuance. They can grapple with hard questions: why did colonialism and missions become entangled? How do missionaries learn to separate the gospel from Western culture? What does it look like to share faith across a genuine worldview difference, not by arguing, but by living?

Weekly rhythm:

- Monday: In-depth people group study. Read the profile, then go deeper with outside research. What is their political situation? Their economic life? Their art and literature?
- Tuesday-Wednesday: Missionary biography (longer chapter readings). Discuss motivations, challenges, and failures.

- Thursday: Comparative geography or history. How does this people group's experience compare to another group you've studied? What patterns emerge?
- Friday: Extended prayer and journaling. Write a reflection on one thing you learned that surprised you.

Grades 9-12: The World Needs Workers, and You Might Be One

High schoolers studying missions should be treated as near-adults preparing for their own response to God's call. Whether they become missionaries, senders, mobilizers, or simply globally aware Christians, this is the time to build the intellectual and spiritual foundation.

Semester-long missions course:

- **Unit 1 (4 weeks):** Biblical theology of missions. Trace God's heart for the nations from Genesis 12 through Revelation 7. Study the Great Commission in all four Gospels and Acts. Read Romans 10:14-15 slowly: "How are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" (ESV)
- **Unit 2 (4 weeks):** History of missions. From the early church through the monastic movement, the Reformation, the Great Awakening, the modern missions movement (William Carey, Hudson Taylor), the Student Volunteer Movement, the post-colonial era, and the current state of global missions.
- **Unit 3 (4 weeks):** Unreached people groups. Deep study of the 10/40 Window, the Joshua Project database, the concepts of reached/unreached/engaged/unengaged. Each student adopts one unreached people group for the semester.
- **Unit 4 (4 weeks):** Practical missions. Linguistics and Bible translation. Cross-cultural communication. Short-term vs. long-term missions. Tent-making (working a secular job while doing missions). How to discern a call.

A One-Week Unit Study: The Berber Peoples of North Africa

Here is a complete one-week missions unit study that any homeschool family can use. It is designed for grades 3-8 but can be adapted up or down.

Monday: Who Are the Berbers?

The Berber peoples, they call themselves Amazigh, meaning "free people", have lived in North Africa for at least 4,000 years. They were there before the Arabs, before the Romans, before the Phoenicians. They live across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and into the Sahara Desert, where the Tuareg (a Berber subgroup) navigate by the stars and lead camel caravans across sand dunes that can reach 500 feet high.

Activities:

- Find Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia on a map. Label the Atlas Mountains and the Sahara Desert.
- Learn three words in Tamazight (the Berber language): azul (hello), tanemmirt (thank you), ayyuz (courage).
- Read the people group profile and record three facts in a journal.

Tuesday: Berber History and Geography

The Atlas Mountains of Morocco rise to over 13,000 feet. In winter, their peaks are covered in snow. The Berber villages that cling to their slopes are built of red-brown clay and stone, with flat roofs where women spread wheat to dry in the sun. The air smells of cedar smoke and thyme, wild thyme grows everywhere on the mountainsides, and Berber women brew it into a tea that they drink with chunks of sugar broken from a cone-shaped block with a small brass hammer.

Activities:

- Study the geography of the Atlas Mountains. What tectonic forces created them? Compare their height to a familiar mountain range.
- Research the climate zones of Morocco: Mediterranean coast, mountain highlands, and Sahara Desert. Chart average temperatures and rainfall.
- Read a chapter from a book about North African history.

Wednesday: Berber Art and Culture

Berber art is geometric. Their carpets, woven by women on vertical looms, are covered in diamond shapes, zigzags, and crosses that carry symbolic meanings passed from mother to daughter. Each region has its own patterns. A carpet from the Middle Atlas looks nothing like one from the High Atlas, and a knowledgeable buyer can identify the village of origin from the pattern alone.

Activities:

- Study photos of Berber carpets. Identify recurring geometric shapes.
- Create a geometric design on graph paper using traditional Berber patterns. Color it with warm earth tones, rust, ochre, deep blue, cream.
- Cook a Moroccan dish: simple couscous with vegetables and chickpeas, seasoned with cumin, turmeric, and cinnamon. The sweet-savory combination, cinnamon with chickpeas, surprises most American palates.

Thursday: The Gospel and the Berber World

The Berber peoples are predominantly Muslim, and Islam has been part of their identity for over a thousand years. But their relationship to Islam has always been distinctive, they blended Islamic practice with older Berber traditions, and their version of Islam is often more flexible and locally flavored than what is practiced in the Arab heartlands.

Today, the church among the Berbers is small but growing, particularly among the Kabyle Berbers of Algeria, where a significant movement toward Christ has been building for decades. Kabyle believers worship in Tamazight, sing in their own musical styles, and have translated portions of Scripture into their heart language.

Activities:

- Discuss: what is the difference between respecting someone's religion and agreeing with it? How can we honor Muslim people while also believing that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life?
- Research the Kabyle church movement. What factors contributed to its growth?
- Write a journal entry from the perspective of a Berber believer attending a house church for the first time.

Friday: Prayer and Response

Activities:

- Review everything you learned this week. What surprised you? What do you want to learn more about?
- Write a prayer for the Berber peoples. Be specific, pray for Bible translators working in Tamazight, for Berber believers facing family pressure, for the Tuareg of the deep Sahara who have almost no gospel access.
- Add a pin or dot to your wall map for the Berber peoples.

Using People Group Profiles in Your Curriculum

The people group profiles on our site are designed to function as curriculum components, not just reference pages. Each profile provides the raw material for a full day or full week of study.

Here is how to turn any people group profile into a lesson:

1. **Read the profile aloud** as a family. Pause to discuss unfamiliar concepts.
2. **Find them on a map.** Physical maps are better than digital for this, the act of pointing, touching, and measuring distance with a finger builds spatial memory.
3. **Identify three prayer points.** What specific needs does this community have? What barriers stand between them and the gospel?
4. **Choose one cross-curricular connection.** Is there a geography lesson here? A science topic? A historical event? A language arts activity?
5. **Pray.** End every people group study with prayer. This is not a formality. It is the point.

Over time, your family will build a growing catalog of people groups you have studied and prayed for. That catalog, whether it lives in a journal, on a wall map, or in a binder of completed unit studies, is the most valuable artifact your homeschool will produce. It is a record of a family that looked beyond its own borders and saw the world the way God sees it.

Field Trip Ideas

Homeschool missions education doesn't have to stay at the kitchen table. Here are field trips that bring the curriculum to life:

- **International grocery stores.** Walk the aisles of an Asian, Middle Eastern, or African grocery store. Buy ingredients for a recipe from a people group you're studying. Talk to the shopkeepers, many are immigrants who will gladly tell you about their home country if you ask with genuine curiosity. Notice the bags of teff flour from Ethiopia, the dried hibiscus flowers from Sudan, the jars of ghee from India, the stacks of round flatbread wrapped in plastic.
- **Ethnic restaurants.** Eat at a restaurant run by an immigrant family. Try something unfamiliar. Ask the server what they recommend from their home country.
- **Missions organizations.** If a missions agency has a local or regional office, ask if your family can visit. Many have display rooms with artifacts, maps, and presentations designed for visitors.
- **Cultural festivals.** Many cities host cultural festivals, Lunar New Year celebrations, Diwali festivals, Ethiopian coffee ceremonies, Persian Nowruz gatherings. Attend with your family. Learn. Listen. Watch. These are not missions events, but they are missions education, they put your family in proximity to the cultures you've been studying from a distance.
- **Refugee resettlement centers.** Contact a local refugee organization and ask if your family can volunteer. Sorting donated clothing or assembling welcome baskets for a newly arrived family teaches more about missions in one afternoon than a month of reading.

Recommended Books by Age

Building a missions library takes time. Here are starting points for each age level:

Ages 4-7:

- Picture book biographies from the "Little Lights" or "Do Great Things for God" series

- Window on the World (a prayer guide for kids with short entries on 92 countries and people groups, written for families, with photos and maps)

Ages 8-12:

- The "Christian Heroes: Then & Now" biography series (40+ titles)
- From Akebu to Zapotec: A Book of Bibleless Peoples (introduces kids to people groups without Scripture)
- Operation World (the kids' edition), a country-by-country prayer guide

Ages 13+:

- Don Richardson, Peace Child and Eternity in Their Hearts
- Elisabeth Elliot, Through Gates of Splendor
- Brother Andrew, God's Smuggler
- Perspectives on the World Christian Movement (for advanced high schoolers ready for a college-level missions textbook)

See our full list at [Missions Books for Kids](#) for detailed reviews and reading level guidance.

Building a Year-Long Missions Curriculum

You don't need to buy a boxed curriculum to teach missions in your homeschool. You need a map, a library card, a kitchen, and a plan.

Here is a simple year-long framework:

Months 1-3: Africa. Study three people groups from different regions of Africa (West, East, North). Cook three African meals. Read three missionary biographies set in Africa. Learn basic greetings in three African languages. Study African geography, ecosystems, and history.

Months 4-6: Asia. Same pattern. The diversity of Asia alone could fill a lifetime of study, from the rice paddies of Southeast Asia, where water buffalo stand knee-deep in brown water and the smell of fermenting fish sauce drifts from every village kitchen, to the frozen steppes of Mongolia, where nomadic families live in felt-covered gers and drink salted yak butter tea.

Months 7-9: Middle East and Central Asia. This is 10/40 Window territory. Study the Arab world, the Persian world, and the Turkic peoples of Central Asia. Cook flatbread, rice pilaf, and kebabs. Study the history of Islam with respect and accuracy. Read missionary stories from the most challenging fields on earth.

Months 10-12: The Americas, Europe, and Oceania. Study indigenous unreached groups in South America, immigrant communities in Europe, and the tribal peoples of Papua New Guinea (home to over 800 languages, more linguistic diversity per square mile than anywhere on earth).

By the end of the year, your family will have studied twelve people groups across four macro-regions, read twelve biographies, cooked twelve meals, and prayed twelve specific prayers. That is a missions education. That is a year of seeing the world through God's eyes.

State-by-State Homeschool Missions Guides

Every state has its own homeschool laws, its own communities, and its own connections to the nations. We have written detailed guides for ten of the most active homeschooling states, each one covering state requirements, weekly lesson schedules, local missions connections, and free resources to get started.

- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Texas -- Texas homeschool requirements, Dallas-Fort Worth refugee communities, Houston's global diversity, and border missions connections.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Florida -- Florida's notice of intent process, Miami's Caribbean gateway, and refugee resettlement in Jacksonville and Orlando.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for California -- California's PSA affidavit process, Pacific Rim diaspora communities, and Central Valley connections.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for North Carolina -- NC's DNPE registration, Moravian missions heritage, and Charlotte's growing immigrant communities.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Georgia -- Georgia's declaration of intent, Clarkston's refugee community, and Atlanta's missions organizations.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Ohio -- Ohio's annual notification, Columbus's Somali community, and Dayton's refugee resettlement.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Virginia -- Virginia's four homeschool options, Northern Virginia's international diversity, and colonial missions history.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Pennsylvania -- Pennsylvania's portfolio evaluation, Moravian heritage in Bethlehem, and Philadelphia's global communities.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for New York -- New York's IHIP requirements, NYC as the most linguistically diverse city on earth, and Buffalo's refugee communities.
- Homeschool Missions Curriculum for Illinois -- Illinois's private school classification, Chicago's global neighborhoods, and Moody Bible Institute's missions legacy.

Starting Tomorrow

You don't need to wait for the right curriculum to arrive in the mail. You don't need a degree in missions or a passport full of stamps. You need willingness. That is the only prerequisite.

Tomorrow morning, before you open the math textbook, pull up a people group profile. Read it out loud. Find the group on a map. Pray one sentence.

Then open the math textbook.

The math will be the same. But your children will be different, because they will have started their school day by remembering that the world is larger than their living room, that God loves every person in it, and that He has invited them to be part of His great rescue plan.

That is not a curriculum supplement. That is the foundation on which every other subject stands.

God made the nations. God loves the nations. And God is calling ordinary families, homeschool families stirring porridge, labeling maps, kneading dough at kitchen tables, to carry His name to every people, in every language, until the work is done.

Want more missions resources for your family?

Wonder Letters delivers a hand-illustrated missions letter to your mailbox every month. Stories, activities, and prayer guides about unreached people groups for ages 4-12.

Subscribe at wonderletters.com - \$10/month

Free printable resources, people group profiles, and more:
missionsforkids.com