



Raising Christian Kids

Parent Resource Play and Grow & Grow and Learn Sunday School

February Cycle: Hurting Hearts and Helping Hands: What can we do for Haiti?

Dear Parents—

Although the earthquake in Haiti struck two years ago, there are still many things we can learn from the response to the disaster, the continued needs of the people of Haiti, and God's call for our action. For three weeks (January 29, February 5 and 19), the children of Sunday School will be exploring "Loving our Neighbors in Haiti." This cycle begins our study of outreach, living God's Word, and doing God's work in this world.

The children will be exploring Haiti on an imaginary boat ride to learn about the rich heritage and vibrant culture of Haiti. Haiti is a very small country, roughly the size of the state of Massachusetts. It is home to approximately 8.3 million people, 70% of whom are unemployed and 48% that are illiterate. Despite the poverty and problems, Haiti's culture is rich with African-Caribbean flavors and a history of French colonialism. The children will get a chance to hear and sing Haitian music, prepare and taste Haitian cuisine, and see images of the beautiful, mountainous island.

We will learn what an earthquake is, and how it affected Haitian children. We do not need to go into too much detail of the human tragedy surrounding earthquakes, but the children will be reassured that they are safe, earthquakes are not our everyday experiences, and that the adults who love them will always try to take care of them.

Most importantly, we will learn that, when we care for others, we share God's love. There are more than 300 verses in the Bible that talk about God's concern for people who are sick or poor or unable to care for themselves. So, how can we share God's love and bring God's Kingdom to places that are so different from what we know? We are God's hands and feet and voice in this world. When we take care of other people, we are serving God. Jesus told his followers, "**Just as you did it for one of the least of these, you did it for me.**" **Matthew 25: 40.** This will be our memory verse for the cycle.

Consider spending some time together with your children, talking about the plight of Haitian people. Praying for the people who have lost their homes and who have been hurt gives the children a model for talking to God during times of great need. It's okay to ask God why this happened. Pray for the leaders as they continue to work to rebuild Haiti. Read scripture together. Try Psalm 23, Romans 8: 34-35, 37-39, Psalm 121, or Revelation 21: 2-7. Remind them that we are all children of a God who loves us and has promised to be with us always. "When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm." (Psalm 75:3)

In the Peace of God which passes human understanding, Annika B. Russo