

Kenyon Conference 2007



Children's Program: Experiencing the MDGs

Compiled & Edited by Tracey E. Herzer

Committee contributions by: Ginger Bitikofer, Mark Davis,
Susan McDonald, Peg Sammons and Helen Svoboda-Barber

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Notes about this Program

About the MDGs

More than one billion people live on less than \$1.00 a day. Every day 30,000 children die from preventable consequences of extreme poverty. Every year 500,000 women die from complications of pregnancy – most of them exacerbated by poverty; that's 1370 women every day.

In the year 2000, at the dawning of a new millennium, leaders from 189 nations – including the United States – agreed to work together to cut extreme global poverty in half by 2015. These world leaders unanimously adopted the Millennium Declaration, which led to eight specific Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), to be achieved by 2015. If the world meets these goals, more than 500 million people would be lifted out of extreme poverty.

For more information about the MDGs, check out the United Nations website at www.un.org or Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation at www.e4gr.org

How to Use this Program

We originally designed this material for a 4-day program where we had a Children's Program in two sections each day – one in the morning and one in the evening. The outlines and ideas contained in this document were our IDEAS about what we were going to do, but as any teacher knows, things don't always go as planned. In reality, we ended up with significantly more ideas than we could possibly accomplish within our time limits, but we went ahead and included all ideas in this document so that you might pick and choose the activities that will work best with your group and your time limits.

You do not need to study the MDGs in any particular order, so feel free to move things around. Many of these ideas can easily be adapted to work for Children's Sunday School, VBS or other special programs. We encourage you to take these ideas and adjust them to fit your group – make them your own and then share them with others.

Bag o' MDGs

We wanted the children to leave the program with small symbols of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and so we created a little game. Each time the children gathered for a session, we had a large plastic tub filled with sand where they would dig for "treasure" and find that session's symbol. We gave the children small muslin bags that they could decorate and then use to hold their treasures. We told parents about the symbols and encouraged them to ask their child about that session's treasure, which gave the children opportunity to share their new-found knowledge about that MDG. You don't have to use the same symbols that we used; you can find many of these inexpensive items at discount stores like Walmart or Target, as well as craft stores or party supply stores.

The MDGs in Child-Friendly Language

- GOAL 1** **No more empty tummies, everyone can have what they need.**
There is plenty of food for everyone to have enough.
- GOAL 2** **Primary School for all kids**
All children can go to at least a few years of school regardless of where they live or how much money they have.
- GOAL 3** **Let girls and boys, men and women, be equal.**
Women are treated fairly and with respect, when they go to work and when they are at home with their families.
- GOAL 4** **No more child deaths when they could have easily been made well.**
Children under the age of five don't get sick or die from diseases that can be cured with a visit to the doctor and good medicine.
- GOAL 5** **Improve health for pregnant women.**
Pregnant women can visit a midwife, nurse or doctor during their pregnancy and when they have their baby. If they need medicine, it is available.
- GOAL 6** **Work to end AIDS, malaria and other diseases.**
People are protected from mosquitoes and other bugs that spread disease and make them sick, in simple ways like mosquito nets, or with medicine to make them better again.
- GOAL 7** **Create a healthy environment for everyone, always.**
Everyone has access to clean water to drink and use for washing. The environment is better protected so that all children, and their children, and their children can enjoy the trees, fresh air, clean water, fresh food and beautiful places.
- GOAL 8** **"Thumbs up" to the whole world working together for good.**
Rich governments help poor governments, and people help other people in different countries by sharing money or by paying them fair prices for food when they buy it.

OVERVIEW OF MDG PROGRAM

MDG	Summary of Class Plans	Symbol in “Bag O’ MDGs”
Extreme Poverty (Goal #1)	A: Go to a local field and experience gleaning; hear the Bible story of Ruth & Naomi B: Create drama about Joseph & brothers in famine	Penny
Primary Education (Goal #2)	A: Children experience two different types of school B: Make Jewish tefillin box for Shema – talk about how we learn and how we are Keepers of the Story	Small chalkboards & chalk
Gender Equality (Goal #3)	A: Walk to river & draw water; then purify water B: Baking different kinds of bread from around world – wheat, rice, corn, etc.	Small Mirror
Child Mortality (Goal #4)	A: Create a net of prayers B: Labyrinth & quiet prayer activities	Birthday candles
Maternal Health (Goal #5)	A: What makes Healthy Babies & Healthy Moms? B: Make masks to talk about family roles in taking care of new family members	Baby carriage charms
HIV/AIDS (Goal #6)	A: Beads for Life – sharing the MDGs with others B: All Kinds of Families are Special	Gummy bugs
Enviroment/Water (Goal #7)	A: Pick vegetables from a garden & make salsa B: Recycling awareness activity	Reusable water bottles
Global Partnerships (Goal #8)	A: Photo scavenger hunt – looking for connections B: Making photo frames from recycled cardboard	Peace keychain

MDG #1 – End Extreme Poverty

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Penny -- Explain to the children how a penny might seem like such a small amount of money to us, but how our pennies, joined together, can change the whole world.

ACTIVITY A: Gleaning in the Field

Materials Needed:

- Bible
- Large basket for holding wheat
- Anything to cut wheat?

- When you're hungry, what do you do? Go to the kitchen? Tell a parent? Open a cupboard or refrigerator? Go to a fast food restaurant?

- Lots of times we say, "I'm starving!" but there are lots of people in the world who truly don't have enough food to eat. What would it be like?

- Travel to a field (if possible) and ask the farmer to talk about his crops.

- Ask the children to help you tell the Bible story about two women who were very hungry, by reading some of the following Bible passages
 - Why were Ruth & Naomi hungry? (Ruth 1:1)
 - What was Ruth's idea to find some food? (Ruth 2:3)
 - How did Boaz treat Ruth? (Ruth 2:3-17)

- Show children how to separate the wheat kernels by rubbing it between their hands and chew the kernels like "wheat gum".

ACTIVITY B: A Bible Famine: Joseph & his Brothers

Materials Needed:

- Bible
- Simple costumes – fabric scraps

- Begin the session by reading or summarizing the story of Joseph's brothers coming to Egypt to buy grain during the great famine (Genesis chapters 42-46)

- After you have read the story, explain how the class will act out the story. Decide who will play which character – make sure that everyone is involved in some way.

- Keep the costumes VERY simple – just use fabric scraps, ropes, etc. – so children will rely more on their imaginations and not get caught up in who is wearing what.

- After you have finished with your drama and put the things away, gather the children back together to talk about how this story relates to the MDGs. Talk about how we (like Joseph) have opportunities to help people who don't have enough food to eat.

MDG #2 – Primary Education

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Small chalkboards & chalk – Each child gets one craft-size chalkboard (approx. 3” x 2”) and a piece of chalk. Talk about what it is like for them at school.

ACTIVITY A: School Days Experience

Materials Needed:

- Computer
- Pens/pencils, crayons
- Paper
- Bucket for water, a few cups
- Old gardening book
- Glue and/or tape
- Begin the session by asking students what school is like for them. Ask questions such as:
 - How many children are in your class at school? What is your classroom like?
 - What types of supplies do you need for school?
 - Discuss some of the reasons why children might drop out of school
- Divide the group of students in 2 groups. 1/4 of the children will be assigned to the US school, 3/4 to the school in Uganda. Students must create a presentation about local plant life.
 - **US School** – Students have access to the internet, craft supplies and one-on-one help from a teacher. A snack will be given to the children in the US class, but they will have to give a report/presentation or take a quick “test” on what they have learned
 - **Uganda school** – will meet under a tree, have one outdated book on plants (not necessarily local plants), no art or craft supplies and only one teacher. Water for the class from Uganda will be in a bucket near the end of the property. Make sure that this is not a completely negative experience: No book work, kids learn using song or rhyming game. Possibly eat a local plant – apple? Peas or beans?
- Gather the whole group together again to talk about the experience. What were the pros and cons of each? What things were learned differently? What were learned the same?

ACTIVITY B: Keepers of the Story

Materials Needed:

- Bible
- Scissors
- Small box for each child
- Armband elastic
- Copies of Deut 6:4-9 on small slips of paper – this is the Hebrew Shema
- Glue and/or tape and/or stapler
- Begin the session by reading Deuteronomy 6:4-9. Explain how Jewish people call this passage the “Shema” which is the first words in Hebrew that means “Hear, O Israel”. Jews keep the Shema in very special places – the tefillin (small box) and the mezuzah (on their doors)
- We will be making small boxes that remind us of Jewish tefillin and can hold the words of the Shema as a reminder of how we share important things with people we love. We are keepers of the Story too and we need to be willing to pass it on to other people.
- Each child is given a small box to decorate. They are also given a copy of the Shema to put inside their box. Elastic can then be stapled or glued to the box so that the “tefillin” can be worn around their upper arm.

MDG #3 – Empowering Women

Symbol for Bag o’ MDGs:

- Small mirror – When you look in the mirror, what do you see? Is the face of a boy somehow “better” than the face of a girl? How do you suppose God sees us?

ACTIVITY A: Water, Water Everywhere

Materials Needed:

- Containers for water
- Cloth to roll up for head pads
- Photos of women/girls carrying water
- Several pots for boiling water
- Water filters
- A clear glass
- Containers for purified water
- Begin by asking what kinds of things do we need water for? When you want a drink of water or need to take a bath – where do you get water? Is it always there? This isn’t true for many people. They have to walk to find their water – and that’s what we’re going to do.
- Divide class into “families” and pass out containers. Ask them to think about the things they need water for, and to estimate how much that adds up to in terms of the available containers. How many will they need to fill to get to this time tomorrow? How will they get it home?
- Show pictures from Liberia of women and girls carrying it on their heads. Explain how girls learn this, starting with a small cup at a young age, and work up. Let volunteers try it out. Fill up some containers with water and carry it back inside.
- Pour some water in a clear glass. Ask the students to guess how this water is made fit to drink. Explain that both germs (invisible) and sediment (visible) have to be dealt with. We get rid of germs by boiling, and sediment by pouring the boiled water through a filter. Boil water for 20 minutes and let cool a bit before filtering. While water cools, read thanksgiving over water from the service of Holy Baptism.

ACTIVITY B: The Bread of Life

Materials Needed:

- Bread recipes: wheat, rice, corn, Ethiopian (or others)
- Ingredients
- Mixing bowls – at least 4
- Whisks and wooden spoons
- Baking sheets, pans, as required by the recipes
- Water is a universal symbol of life, but so is bread. Talk about women’s roles of cook, provider, nurturer – connected to food. People from different parts of the world make different kinds of bread. We are used to wheat bread, but there are also breads made with corn or rice or even chickpeas. Today we are going to make 4 different kinds of bread.
- You can find many great websites for different international bread recipes. One great site to try is <http://www.webvalue.net/recipes/bread00.htm>
- Divide into 4 groups, each with a recipe and an adult. Let the baking begin!

MDG #4 – Reduce Child Mortality

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Birthday candles – Talk about birthday parties. Then gently explain that many children in the world die before age 5 because they don't have enough food or clean water or medicines.

ACTIVITY A: A Net of Prayers

Materials Needed:

- Net
- Post it notes
- Pens or pencils
- Safety pins
- Begin the session by explaining that 1 in 10 children of poor countries dies before age 5 (as opposed to 1 in 143 children in wealthier nations). It's okay to preface this session by admitting it is sometimes difficult or even a bit scary to talk about death, but remind children that all our lives – however long or short they are – are held tenderly in God's hands.
- Ask the class, "What do babies need?" (Adults to love and take care of them; Food to help them grow; Diapers; clean, safe place to live and sleep, etc.) How do your parents take care of you? What happens if you get sick? Why do parents want their children to wash their hands, take baths, and eat healthy food like fruits and vegetables?
- In some areas, there isn't enough food for anyone and there aren't very many clean, safe areas and children have a hard time growing up. Some families have to use mosquito nets to keep bugs out that might carry disease. Today, we are going to create a different kind of safety net – a net that holds our prayers and reminds us of how God hovers over us like a protective net.
- Children can write prayers out on post-it note and then pin their prayers to a net.

ACTIVITY B: A Grief Observed

Materials Needed:

- Candles
- Labyrinth?
- Soothing music
- Prayer Stations supplies
- Gather in church. Have children spread out, lay down in pews. Play some soothing music. Ask them to look at the ceiling and think about all the prayers that have been offered in this place – during church services or weddings or funerals or baptisms or in quiet moments alone. Ask "What makes you sad? What do people do when someone they love is sick? What do they do if that person dies? I wonder what it feels like to lose someone you love..."
- After a few moments of quiet (or at least semi-quiet ☺) explain to the children what prayer stations are available for them to experience. (We used some from the Australian TEAR website: http://www.tear.org.au/advocacy/mc.mph/files/extras/mdg_prayer_stations.pdf)
- Another great option would be to have children walk a labyrinth. There are many canvas labyrinths available that can be borrowed from other churches, or you can create your own, using masking tape on the floor.

MDG #5 – Improve Maternal Health

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Small plastic baby carriages (decoration favors for baby showers) – as children find them, talk about what babies need and who has ever helped take care of a baby.

ACTIVITY A: Healthy Moms mean Healthy Babies!

Materials Needed:

- Chalkboard/chalk or newsprint/markers
- Pens or pencils
- 20+ small slips of paper
- Talk about pregnancy & babies: What does a pregnant mother need? (food, sleep, health care, etc.) What do babies need to be born healthy? What roles do dads and other adults play?
- Divide the class into two teams so they can play Pictionary or Charades. Each team writes 10 or more clues on their slips of paper. (Each clue represents something a woman needs to have during her pregnancy – healthy food like broccoli, carrots, etc. plenty of sleep, vitamins, clean environment, doctor's visits, etc.)
- When the clues are all done, someone from the opposing team comes over and draws a slip of paper. That person then tries to draw or act out that clue (without speaking) so that their team can guess the clue on the paper. If their team guesses correctly, they get a point.

ACTIVITY B: Families work together

Materials Needed:

- Plain white paper plates
- Scissors
- Markers / Crayons / Paint
- Glue or glue sticks
- Yarn (optional for hair)
- Large popsicle sticks
- Construction paper
- Masking tape
- In families, we work together and this is especially important when a new baby is born. How can families work together to create healthy families and healthy moms? Have children help think of examples, such as:
 - Dads help take care of new mom & baby
 - Grandparents might come visit to help
 - Older siblings help – anyone remember having a new baby brother or sister?
- Have children use paper plates to make simple masks that depict either someone in their family or someone they can imagine would be helpful to a new mom. Give them a few minutes to decorate their masks. Have them (or an adult helper) then tape a large popsicle stick to the edge of the plate as a kind of handle for the mask.
- Gather the group together and have them practice in groups of 2 or 3, holding up their masks and talking (as if they were that person) about how they can help a new mom or baby.
- Close by offering a prayer of thanks for our families and all those who take care of us.

MDG #6 – Combat HIV & Malaria

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Gummy bugs – These individually-wrapped candy bugs were a popular treasure and a great way to introduce the danger of how bugs (especially mosquitoes) can spread serious diseases.

ACTIVITY A: Beads for Life

Materials Needed:

- Colorful scrap paper – from newspapers, magazines, catalogs, etc.
- Scissors
- Glue
- String or yarn for bracelets
- Pre-made beads from www.beadforlife.org
- Straws or skewers to use for bead making

- Today we are going to talk about sickness and healing. See if children can name Bible stories about sickness or healing (Moses and the serpent on a stick, The Good Samaritan, Jesus heals the 10 lepers, other healings of people who were blind, lame, sick, etc.)
- What can we do to help people who are suffering today? We can share what we are learning about the MDGs or we can help raise money to donate to organizations like Episcopalians for Global Reconciliation (www.e4gr.org) who are committed to helping achieve the MDGs.
- Some people in Africa get money by making beads from scrap paper (www.beadsforlife.org) If possible, order some beads direct from this website to show as samples to the children. You can let children make a few of their own beads from scrap paper – for detailed instructions, see http://www.tappi.org/paperu/art_class/paperBeads.htm
- Children can create bracelets with 8 beads – one for each of the 8 MDGs. You may also want to have children offer these bracelets to adults in exchange for donations that can be used to purchase mosquito nets or another MDG-theme charity of your choice.

ACTIVITY B: What does FAMILY look like?

Materials Needed:

- Newspapers & magazines
- Scissors
- Glue or glue sticks
- Poster board or construction paper
- Markers / crayons
- Because AIDS is making so many orphans, there are many new families being created. There are homes where these children can go to be a part of a family again. What does FAMILY look like? There are many, many different types of families.
- You may want to use two books: *If the World Were a Village* by David Smith – a wonderfully illustrated book that boils the world's population down to a village of 100 to make it easier to understand and *Hungry Planet: What the World Eats* by Peter Menzel – pictures of families from around the world (<http://www.time.com/time/photogallery/0,29307,1626519,00.html>) to help students connect with other families' experiences.
- Ask students to make a collage that represents FAMILY – either the family they are in now or just a representation of what they think family should look like.

MDG #7 – Environment

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Reusable water bottles – We picked up colorful plastic water bottles (with built-in straw) at a local everything's-a-dollar store. We also found glass bead charms that had a small green leaf etched in them and we put those on a string around each bottle neck.

ACTIVITY A: The Three Rs: Reduce ~ Reuse ~ Recycle

Materials Needed:

- Bible
- Plain tote bags – one for each child
- Fabric markers or crayons
- Vegetable dyes & stamps (optional)
- Read (or have one of the children read) Genesis 1:28-31. After reading, ask the group what they think it means to “have dominion” over something. What kind of relationship does this imply between humans and the rest of creation? How can we take care of God’s creation?
- Go over the “three Rs” of caring for the environment. Many children will know this concept from school or other places: **REDUCE** – **REUSE** – **RECYCLE** – have the class work together to brainstorm ideas for each category.
- Hand out the cloth tote bags and have each child decorate their bag and take it home to be a reusable grocery bag. Use fabric markers or crayons. If you are feeling adventurous, you could use vegetable dyes and/or stamps made from carved potatoes.

ACTIVITY B: Salsa from the Garden

Materials Needed:

- Cutting boards
- Knives or several child-safe plunger-style vegetable choppers
- Bowls
- Spoons
- Limes
- Onions, tomatoes, peppers, garlic & herbs like cilantro, oregano, etc.
- Salt & pepper
- Tortilla chips
- Cold water to fill the children’s reusable water bottles
- To begin the session, ask if anyone’s family has a garden and what kinds of things do you have to do to take care of a garden.
- Go to a local garden and pick tomatoes, onions, herbs, etc.
- Have children work in small groups (with adult supervision) to chop up tomatoes and onions. We found that the plunger-style choppers worked great for safe chopping! You can find many recipes for salsa, but you can also just make it by taste. Start with 2 medium-size tomatoes and half (or less) of a small onion. Add a small amount of peppers, garlic and herbs, tasting as you go. Squeeze some lime juice in and season with salt & pepper to taste.
- Serve salsa with tortilla chips and have water available to drink. Share your snack with parents and other adults.

MDG #8 – Global Partnerships

Symbol for Bag o' MDGs:

- Peace key chains – We found a package of brightly colored peace-symbol key chains party favors. Talk about what the symbol means and how peace might affect global partnerships.

ACTIVITY A: We Are the Body of Christ: Making the Connection

Materials Needed:

- Digital or Polaroid Camera(s)
- Bible
- Paper
- Pens & Pencils
- We have looked at seven important goals and now it is time to look at the last one – our eighth Millennium Development Goal: Create Global partnerships. Ask what “partnership” means. What does it mean to work with a partner or to “cooperate”? Can you think of things you have done where you have needed a partner at school? At home? At play or on teams?
- Working together as partners isn't just a “nice idea” – it's what God asks of us. Have someone read I Corinthians 12:12-26. After hearing the scripture, ask what does it mean to be the “body of Christ”? How can we work together? What happens if we try to work separately?
- Divide the class into small groups. Give each group a camera and tell them they need to spread out and work together to find pictures of cooperation and partnership. When everyone has a picture, the group can gather back together and share what they found and what they learned. Close with a prayer, asking God to help us (and our countries!) to be good partners.

ACTIVITY B: We are all Connected

Materials Needed:

- Cereal or other cardboard boxes
- Rulers or frame template
- Pens & Pencils, markers, crayons
- Glue and/or tape
- Scissors
- Stickers or Foam Stickers
- Puzzle pieces (optional)
- Photo printer
- Photo paper & extra ink
- Have an adult print out the digital pictures from the last session. The pictures can print while the kids work on creating their photo frames, but you'll need a head start or you might not finish printing all the pictures before the class time is up.
- Frames can be made from recycled cardboard – cereal boxes, etc. Have students trace or measure the size of their picture (usually 3x5 or 4x6) and draw that on the box. Then they need to measure and draw another rectangle that is approximately 1-2 inches larger on all sides. Then they cut out both rectangles to create the frame.
- The front of the frame can be decorated with markers, crayons, foam shapes, stickers, etc. or even with old puzzle pieces – which makes a great reminder of being part of the Body of Christ. Once the frame is decorated, the picture can be taped to the back of the frame. Children can take home their picture as a reminder of the ways in which we are connected to each other and to other people all around the globe.