



3 Into the disaster zone

Four missions experiences on the theme that Christians should help in times of disaster

Location: Japan

Focus verse: Psalm 46:1-2 – “God is our refuge and strength, a helper who is always found in times of trouble. Therefore we will not be afraid, though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas.”

Overall message: Kids can help others when disaster strikes by caring for them and telling them about Jesus.

Overview: When disaster strikes, we often wonder what we can do to help. We are reminded of the blessings God has given us and want to share those blessings with others. In March 2011 an earthquake and accompanying tsunami devastated a portion of northern Japan. Colin and Hannah Seelen, two missionary kids living in Japan, learned first-hand how to help others in the disaster zone. In times of crisis, Christians have a unique opportunity to share Jesus’ love by helping others and sharing the eternal hope we have through Him.

- Each missions experience is designed to last 10-15 minutes.
- Use as an addition to a weekly meeting or combine for a longer missions focus.
- Customize these resources to fit your needs.



Taking it in

Into the disaster zone — MX 1

A 10- to 15-minute cultural experience

Prepare

- Bring two sets of chopsticks.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
 - **Japan disaster zone photos**
 - 2 copies of **Into the disaster zone focus verse**. Cut each focus verse sheet into an equal number of puzzle pieces. Place each set in two baskets on the opposite side of the room.
 - **East Asia map**

Activity – Chopsticks relay

- Divide kids into two groups.
- Hand the first child in each line one set of chopsticks.
- Explain that each child must walk to the other side of the room, pick up a puzzle piece with chopsticks and take it to their group.
- The child then hands the chopsticks to the next in line.
- When the group has all the pieces of the focus verse, they should work together to complete the puzzle.
- The first team to complete the puzzle wins.
- Read the verses together.
- Explain you will talk about a time the earth trembled in Japan.

Discuss

- Ask one child to find Japan on the **East Asia map**.
- Brainstorm a few things kids may know about Japan. Examples might include: most people eat with chopsticks; Japanese is the official language; Tokyo is Japan's capital and the largest city in the world.
- Explain that on March 11, 2011, a magnitude 9.0 earthquake struck (that's big!) off the coast of Japan which triggered a huge tsunami (giant wave!). The combined damage of the earthquake and tsunami caused huge amounts of destruction in Japan's northern region. The earthquake was so powerful it actually shifted the Earth's axis a little.
- Share that since that time, many Christians have sent relief supplies and volunteered to help in the clean-up effort. Missionaries who live in Japan also offered help.
- Show the Japan disaster zone photos and read the captions.

Pray

Pray that even through destruction, the people of Japan will see how God builds hope into their lives.



Taking it up

Into the disaster zone — MX 2

A 10- to 15-minute prayer experience

Prepare

- Prepare to show the **Into the disaster zone video** from the DVD-ROM. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
 - **Japan disaster zone photos** (if you haven't already)
Stick photos on the wall with tape. Space them out so that the children will have to walk around the room to see them.
 - **Into the disaster zone focus verse** (if you haven't already)

Recap (optional)

Explain that God wants us to help others when disaster strikes. When a huge earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of Japan, Christians responded by showing Jesus' love and telling others about Him.

Discuss

- Ask for a volunteer to read the focus verse.
- Ask kids what it means for God to be our refuge and strength. Ask them to give examples from their own lives of when God has helped them.
- Share that God used missionaries already living in Japan to help the people living there when the earthquake and tsunami occurred. Instruct kids to watch how God used the Seelen family to share Him with others by providing His strength and refuge during this time of disaster.
- Show the **Into the disaster zone video**.

Prayerwalk

- Lead the children on a "prayerwalk" around the room, stopping at each picture to pray for the situation and the people involved. Ask for volunteers to pray at each picture.
- Close the time by thanking God that Christians have responded to the needs in Japan and for missionaries like the Seelens who were already there to help.



Giving it up

Into the disaster zone — MX 3

A 10- to 15-minute giving experience

Prepare

- Prepare to show the **Part of the work video** from the DVD-ROM. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
 - **Into the disaster zone focus verse** (if you haven't already)
 - **A part of the work handout** (print a copy for each child)

Recap (optional)

Ask for volunteers to share the focus verse. Explain that God wants us to help others when disaster strikes. When a huge earthquake and tsunami devastated parts of Japan, missionaries already living there were able to respond quickly to their needs. Other Christians also responded by showing Jesus' love and telling others about Him.

Activity - Countdown

- Pass out a **Part of the work handout** to each child.
- Show the **Part of the work video** and ask the kids to circle what they think is the correct answer to the trivia questions. Encourage them to keep track of how many they got right.
- After the video, ask kids how many chose all the correct answers. Discuss some of the needs missionaries have that they saw in the video.
- Explain that when we give to missions, we are providing those things for missionaries. Giving to missions means that we are a part of the work.
- Remind children that missionary kids Colin and Hannah Seelen worked with their parents to help the people of Japan after the tsunami. We support missionaries like the Seelens so they can tell the Japanese people about Jesus. Because we give, the Seelens were right where God needed them to be when the earthquake hit.
- Discuss the ways your church gives to missions. Ask your children how they can participate in the offerings.

Pray

Ask God to show your group ways to give to missions. Thank God that people give so we can have missionaries all over the world telling people about Jesus.



Taking it personally

Into the disaster zone — MX 4

A 10- to 15-minute serving experience

Prepare

- Research recent disasters in your community, state or the U.S. to add to the group's discussion.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
 - **Family help kit handout**
 - **God is our refuge notes**
 - **Into the disaster zone focus verse** (if you haven't already)

Recap (optional)

Ask volunteers to share the focus verse. Explain that God is our refuge and strength in times of disaster. When we give to missions, we provide for missionaries who are telling people about Jesus and are ready to respond to disasters all over the world. We can help others where we are and share the love of Jesus.

Discuss

- Talk about ways that people can help each other in times of disaster. Answers may include giving of time or money, listening to someone in need, donating clothing or food to shelters, etc.
- Discuss disasters in the U.S. that kids may have heard about on the news or that have happened in your community. Ask them if they know families affected by house fires or natural disasters.
- Explain that God has provided many resources to everyone on Earth, but sometimes it is difficult to share resources so that everyone has enough. When we share our resources with others, we are showing God's love for others.

Activity - Family help kit

- Distribute the **Family help kit handouts**.
- As a group, go over the list, asking children what items they might already have at home.
- Make plans to lead the church in putting together a kit that will be ready to help a family in need.

(MX 4 continued)



Taking it personally

Into the disaster zone — MX 4 (continued)

A 10- to 15-minute serving experience

Activity – God is our refuge notes

- Explain that in times of disaster it's important to remind others that God loves them and that they can have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ.
- Distribute the **God is our refuge notes** to each child. Ask them to write a note of encouragement to people who are suffering from a disaster. Take the opportunity to also share the Gospel. Younger children may turn the notes over and draw a picture for the family.
- Make plans to include the notes with the kit that will be given to a family in your community.

Pray

Challenge kids to commit to pray every day for God to show them how they can help others who are in need and for boldness to also share the Gospel with them.



Going further

Into the disaster zone

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Ideas for mission projects based on this theme

Follow through on the plan to collect a **Family help kit**. The website of the North American Mission Board (www.namb.net) has plans for a much larger kit. They also have a powerpoint presentation that can be shared with your church. Let the children be a part of promoting the project, collecting the supplies and putting the kit together. The kit can be kept at the church, ready to bring to a family in need who faces disaster. Be sure to include the encouraging notes from your group.

Baptist Global Response (gobgr.org) includes ways to minister during disasters around the world. Present two or three projects from Baptist Global Response to your kids. Spend a few minutes explaining each project and the steps needed to participate. Ask children to choose either individually or as a group to participate in one of the projects. Challenge them to complete their project in a certain number of days/weeks.

Have other great ideas? Find us on Facebook and let us hear from you.