



## 1 Just as you are

Four missions experiences on the theme that God can use you just as you are

**Location:** *Japan (also Uruguay and Paraguay in South America)*

**Focus verse: Ephesians 2:10** “For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them.”

**Overall message:** God wants to use you – just like you are – for His good works.

**Overview:** Each of us is created in the image of God, but we are very different from one another. We have different strengths and different challenges, but God wants each of us to focus on what we can do for His kingdom.

Steven Kunkel is a missionary kid from South America who now serves as a missionary in Japan. Steven has autism, a developmental disorder that can cause problems with behavior, communication and social interactions. But Steven also has some amazing abilities and he is using those to share Jesus with the people of Japan. Through Christ’s strength, Steven is bringing others to the Lord by using both his gifts and limitations.

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

*Leaders: Please be sensitive to children in your group with autism or children who have autistic family members. Present the material in a positive manner. Speak with their families about how this material can be used effectively to educate the other children about the strengths of people with autism and how they can be used by God for His purposes.*



# Taking it in

## Just as you are — MX 1

A 10- to 15-minute cultural experience

### Prepare

From the DVD-ROM, download and print:

- **Japan map**
  - **Just as you are focus verse**
  - **Steven Kunkel photo**
  - **Ultimate challenge handout.** Make a copy for each child.
  - **Born for this** article. Read this ahead of time to give you more information about Steven and his family. Share this information with your kids as appropriate or as they have interest.
- From the DVD-ROM, prepare to show the **STIBUNO video**. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.

### Introduction

- Explain that your group is going to meet a very special missionary.
- Show the **Steven Kunkel photo**.
- Tell them that Steven grew up in South America (he lived in Uruguay and Paraguay) where his parents are missionaries.
- Now he's 23 years old and he lives in Japan, telling people about Jesus.
- Find the countries where Steven has lived on a world map or globe. Also show the **Japan map**, so they can see where Steven is now.

### Video

- Show the **STIBUNO video**. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.

### Discussion

- Ask the kids: "What is a challenge that Steven faces?" Explain that autism is a developmental disorder that causes problems with behavior, communication and relationships to other people.
- As appropriate for your group, share more of Steven's story that you read in the **Born for this** article.
- Ask the kids to share Steven's strengths. (art, music, languages)
- Ask how God is using Steven in Japan. Is his autism holding him back from telling people about Jesus?

*(MX 1 continued)*



# Taking it in

## Just as you are — MX 1 (continued)

A 10- to 15-minute cultural experience

### *Activity - Ultimate challenge*

- Give each child an Ultimate challenge handout. Read the top line aloud: “Your ultimate challenge is what God wants you to do.” It’s not about what you *can’t* do.
- Point out the picture of Stibuno, the manga character Steven created. Ask if anyone is familiar with this popular style of Japanese comic.
- Ask if they remember what Steven said in the video about Stibuno’s ultimate challenge. [“To live in a dark world and for him to become a leader, to share the Gospel.”] Ask them to fill in the blank.
- Next to Steven’s photo, ask them to write in his ultimate challenge. [to share the Gospel, using his gifts]
- In the empty box, tell them to draw a picture of themselves and write in their ultimate challenge.
- Encourage them to use their own words, but explain that Jesus’ great purpose for everyone is to know Him and tell others about Him. That’s what Kids On Mission is all about!
- Show the **Just as you are focus verse**. Read it together as a group to emphasize our “ultimate challenge.”

### *Pray*

Ask God to help each child use his or her life for the good work God has waiting for them.



# Taking it up

## Just as you are — MX 2

A 10- to 15-minute prayer experience

### Prepare

- Bring one clear glass, a pitcher of water and a tray to hold any spills when you pour the water.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
  - **Steven in Japan photos**

### Recap

Steven Kunkel is a missionary in Japan. Steven has autism, but he doesn't let that stop him from telling the people of Japan about Jesus. He is using his gifts in art, music and languages to let everyone around him know that Jesus loves them and that they can have a personal relationship with Him. We need to remember that God can use us, just as we are.

### Activity - Half-full or half-empty?

- In front of the children, fill the glass half full with water.
- Mention that there are two ways to look at how full the glass is. Ask the kids what these two ways are. (The glass is half full or half empty.)
- Explain that so much of how we experience life depends on our perspective — how we look at things. If we are constantly looking at the bad in our lives (the glass half empty), then our lives will seem bad. If we focus on all the good in our lives (the glass half full), then our lives will seem brighter.
- Ask them how they think Steven Kunkel looks at the glass. (If you did not do MX 1, consider showing the **STIBUNO video** and sharing some background information about Steven.)
- Ask what it would mean for the people of Japan if Steven used his autism as an excuse to not share about Jesus.
- Ask a child to look up and read Philippians 4:13. Tell them that this is Steven's favorite Bible verse. Why do they think Steven likes this verse so much?

### Prayertime

- One-at-a-time, hold up the **Steven in Japan photos**.
- Ask for one volunteer to read each caption, which tells about the people of Japan and Steven's ministry.
- With each photo, stop and ask what kinds of prayer requests come to mind for Steven and the people of Japan.
- Ask for a volunteer to pray as you look at each photo.
- Remind kids that their prayers are powerful and that prayer is a great way for us to be a part of sharing Jesus all over the world.

(continued)



# Taking it up

## Just as you are — MX 2 (continued)

*A 10- to 15-minute prayer experience*

### *Prayers of praise*

- Remind the kids that so much of how we feel about our lives depends on our perspectives. (The glass is half full or half empty.)
- Point out that Steven has chosen to praise God for all He has given him — the good and the bad.
- Suggest that the kids practice turning some of their thoughts into prayers of praise:
  - I wish I could run faster. (Thank you God for giving me legs and feet to walk and run.)
  - I don't like Susie. (God, I thank you for creating everyone. Please help me to see ways to show your love to Susie.)
  - Tommy's parents let him do anything he wants. (Lord, I thank you that you have given me parents who love me and are concerned about me. Thank you that they set boundaries to keep me safe.)
- Take time for some of the kids to voice their prayers of praise to God.
- Close this prayer experience thanking God for missionaries like Steven and for the kids in your group. Thank God for letting each of you be a part of His mission.



# Giving it up

## Just as you are — MX 3

*A 10- to 15-minute giving experience*

### *Prepare*

- From the DVD-ROM, prepare to show the **Kunkel family photos slideshow**. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.
- Ask your church staff the date for the next missions offering. If your church does not collect regular missions offerings, set a collection date for your group.

### *Recap*

Steven Kunkel is a missionary in Japan. Steven has autism, but he doesn't let that stop him from telling the people of Japan about Jesus. He is using his gifts in art, music and languages to let everyone around him know that Jesus loves them and that they can have a personal relationship with Him. We need to remember that God can use us, just as we are.

### *Video - Kunkel family photos*

- Introduce the video by reminding the group that Steven Kunkel grew up in South America where his parents still serve as missionaries.
- Tell them to watch some photos of Steven and his family in the countries of Paraguay and Uruguay.
- Play the **Kunkel family photos slideshow** from a DVD player or computer. Be prepared to read the words on the screen aloud.

### *Brainstorm*

- Divide the kids into groups.
- Ask them to brainstorm some things that the Kunkels had to buy for their children growing up. *Hint: it's many of the same things their parents spend money on for them! (food, clothes, school supplies, sports fees, doctor visits)*
- Ask each group to make a list on a piece of paper.
- For younger children, ask them to draw pictures of things they need that cost money or do the brainstorming activity together.
- Allow time for the groups to share some of the costs that came to their minds.
- Explain that all missionary families need money to live in the countries where God has called them to live.
- Tell the kids that when we give money to missions, we are giving to help support these families so that they have time to tell people about Jesus and start churches.

*(MX 3 continued)*



# Giving it up

## Just as you are — MX 3 (continued)

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*A 10- to 15-minute giving experience*

### *Activity - Plan to give*

- Encourage the kids to participate in the next church missions offering, if they haven't before.
- Put the date of the next collection somewhere in your room as a reminder, or make plans to collect as a children's group if your church does not regularly give to missions.
- Ask them to think of ways that they can raise money to give to missions.
- Together, come up with a class goal. Make a point to remind the kids each week about their commitment to give to missions.

### *Pray*

Thank God for missionaries and that we can be a part of their work through our giving.



# Taking it personally

## Just as you are — MX 4

*A 10- to 15-minute serving experience*

### *Prepare*

- From the DVD-ROM, prepare to show the **Japanese lesson** video. This will play from a DVD player or a computer.
- From the DVD-ROM, download and print:
  - **Manga comic.** Make enough copies for every child to have one.

### *Recap*

Steven Kunkel is a missionary in Japan. Steven has autism, but he doesn't let that stop him from telling the people of Japan about Jesus. He is using his gifts in art, music and languages to let everyone around him know that Jesus loves them and that they can have a personal relationship with Him. We need to remember that God can use us, just as we are.

### *Discuss*

- Ask the kids how Steven is using his God-given abilities to serve others and bring people to Christ.
  - Steven is learning lots of languages.
    - He can use these languages to translate and to train and equip believers.
    - He can use these languages in communicating with non-believers in their heart language.
  - Steven is good at art and music.
    - He uses his drawings to tell people about Jesus. He creates Bible-based cartoons featuring a style of cartoon characters popular in Japan.
    - He uses his music to minister in the church.
    - He uses his music to tell people about Jesus.
  - Despite his autism, through Christ's strength, Steven is accomplishing what no one thought he would ever be able to do.

### *Video - Japanese lesson*

- Tell the group that Steven is going to help you all with your language abilities.
- Play the **Japanese lesson** video.

*(MX 4 continued)*





# Taking it personally

## Just as you are — MX 4 (continued)

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*A 10- to 15-minute serving experience*

### *Pray*

- Ask the children to think of the talents/abilities that God has given them.
- Ask them to think of some specific ways they could use their God-given talents/abilities this week.
- Challenge the kids to actually carry out one of the things they brainstormed about above.
- Give them each a copy of the **manga comic**.
- Encourage them to give the copy of Steven's comic to someone they know who does not know Christ.
- Ask them to be ready to report to the group next week on how things went.

### *Pray*

Ask the Lord to help the children to use their God-given talents to bring Him glory in all they do. Pray that each child will become all God created him or her to be.



# Going further

Just as you are  
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*Ideas for mission projects based on this theme*

Go to **baptistglobalresponse.com**. Search the BGR projects that might be appropriate for your group. These projects are the perfect way for your kids to learn that God does want to use them, just like they are. Though most children won't have the opportunity to go overseas, they can be involved in international ministry right now. Whether they are packing hygiene kits for victims of AIDS or planning a community-wide 5K race to raise money to fight world hunger, they can be involved – at any age and wherever they live. Search the “Projects” tab for great hands-on activities appropriate for all age groups.