

Leader's Guide



Tough Times

Four missions experiences on sharing the gospel with families in crisis

Location: Syria

Focus verse: Psalm 42:11 “Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me? Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God.”

Overall message: Syria has been devastated by civil war since 2011. According to official estimates, 6.5 million Syrians have been displaced in some way. Many families have left the country; some live in refugee camps. The conditions Syrians must face daily breaks the hearts of Christian workers providing them with aid and encouragement. One worker recognizes that tough times have provided believers with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to share the gospel: *God is saying, ‘I am bringing them to you.’ This is an opportunity; this is a kairos moment. And we need to see them as windows of opportunity that may close. We may not have this opportunity for long. There are 23 million Syrians that have virtually had no access to the gospel. We now have access and opportunities to proclaim the gospel like never before.*

This is a tough subject, but one that kids can begin to understand. Phrase things in a way that is appropriate for your group. Help them see that Christians can respond to families in crisis in a way that leads to their salvation.

This leader's guide includes plans for four, short missions experiences that can be added to your existing programs or events:



Cultural experience



Prayer experience



Giving experience



Serving experience

- 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.
- [Note: If you are using the DVD-ROM, all videos and handouts are included. Please follow the directions on the cover to access all files.]

Here is a simple glossary that may be useful to you as you communicate these ideas to children:

Mission(s) — A job God gives a person He has chosen to tell another group of people the Good News about Jesus. The person God sends is called a missionary.

Missionary — A Christian chosen by God who obeys His command to go and tell another group of people the Good News about Jesus. (Preschool version) A Christian chosen by God who obeys and goes to tell another group of people about Jesus.

People group — A group of people who share the same language and way of life.

IMB (International Mission Board) — A group created by Southern Baptist churches to share Jesus with people around the world who wouldn't otherwise have the opportunity to know and follow Him.

Tough Times Cultural Experience

Prepare

- From the DVD-ROM or kidsonmission.org, prepare to show the **School's out** video.
- Download and print one **Syria map**, the **Tough Times focus verse**, and two copies of the **What's Happening? match game**. (If possible, use card stock for the match game cards.) Cut the game cards apart.
- Bring a coin.

Introduction

Tell kids that you are going to be learning about people in a very difficult part of the world, one they might have heard about in the news. Show kids the **Syria map**. Lead kids to calculate how old they were in 2011. Explain that the youngest Syrian boys and girls have never known a life without war.

Scramble both sets of the **What's Happening? match game** cards and place them face down on a table. Lead kids to take turns flipping two cards at a time in order to find matching cards. When a player does so, prompt her to read aloud the information on the cards.

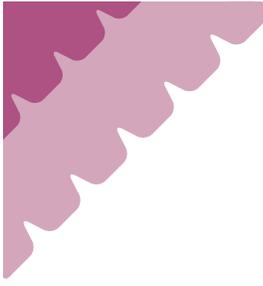
Tough times

- Show kids the **School's out** video.
- Let kids take turns tossing a penny. Kids who toss “heads” should identify the ways Syrian kids’ lives are different from their own; “tails” should identify ways Syrian kids’ lives are the same.
- Explain that Zoe McAlister’s* parents help provide humanitarian relief to Syrian refugees. Their team helps provide food and hygiene items, blankets, beds and heaters. They also help arrange medical clinics, job and language training. Their most important job is visiting families in their homes and sharing the good news with them.
- Display the **Tough Times focus verse**. Define *turmoil* — a state of extreme confusion.
- Explain that Christian workers who live in this part of the world and short-term volunteers work hard to help Syrians discover that God is at work, even during tough times. Ask: *How do you think tough times in Syria are providing opportunities for people to share the good news about God's love?*

Pray

Ask God to help Syrian families discover reasons to praise God in tough times.





Tough Times Prayer Experience



Prepare

- From the DVD-ROM or **kidsonmission.org**, prepare to show the **Dreams** video.
- From the DVD-ROM or **kidsonmission.org**, download and print the **Tough Times focus verse** and one **HOPE coloring page** for each child.
- Provide crayons or markers.
- If available, bring a small white board and dry erase marker, like the one used in the **Dreams** video.

Recap

Years of war have disrupted normal family life for many Syrians. Millions of people have lost their homes, been forced to leave their country and had to settle in crowded refugee camps. Many Syrian kids have not been to school for months or years. They are just trying to survive. Christians are providing practical and spiritual help to Syrian families so they can see God at work in very hard times.

What's to hope for?

- If you have a white board, let kids write what they would like to be when they grow up and show it to the group, like the kids do in the **Dreams** video.
- Show the **Dreams** video. Explain that Syrian kids have hopes and dreams for the future, just like all kids.
- Lead kids to recall the conditions in which many Syrian kids are growing up. Help them identify circumstances that might cause a Syrian family to lose hope.
- Display the **Tough Times focus verse**.
- Form two groups. Lead one group to stand and say the first phrase of the verse (*Why am I so depressed? Why this turmoil within me?*) while making a “thumbs down” gesture. Cue the second group to say the remaining phrase (*Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God.*) while signaling “thumbs up.” Group the kids in several different ways (girls/boys, tie-up shoes/slip-on shoes, dog lovers/cat lovers) and repeat the activity until kids can say the verse from memory.
- Ask: *What can Christian workers tell Syrian families that would give them hope?*

Prayer time

- Give everyone a **HOPE coloring page**. As kids color the outline letters, encourage them to pray silently that Syrian refugee families find hope and peace through Jesus.





Tough Times Giving Experience



Prepare

- From the DVD-ROM or kidsonmission.org, prepare to show or replay the **School's out** video.
- From the DVD-ROM or kidsonmission.org, download and print one **OneLife tag** for each person. Separate the tags (kids can finish cutting them neatly).
- Provide scissors, a hole punch, and yarn, shoestrings or lanyards.

Recap

Years of war have disrupted normal family life for many Syrians. Millions of people have lost their homes, been forced to leave their country and had to settle in crowded refugee camps. Many Syrian kids have not been to school for months or years. They are just trying to survive. Christians are providing practical and spiritual help to Syrian families so they can see God at work in very hard times.

Beep, beep!

- Before you show or replay the **School's out** video, give these instructions: when kids notice something that people have gathered and given to Syrian refugee families, they should stand and say, *beep!*
- When kids signal you, pause the video and call for a volunteer to identify the item (*tents, tables/desks, pencils, workbooks, markers, food, clothing, Bibles*).

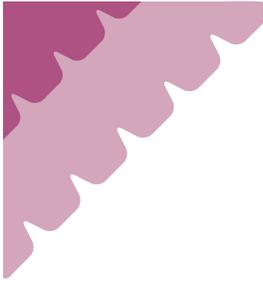
Take-home tags

- As you continue debriefing the video, challenge kids to identify relief supplies that might be difficult to pack and ship in a box, such as shelter, fresh food and water and (smile as you mention it) live teachers!
- Explain that sometimes the best way to assist people in need is providing money. Cash gifts make it possible for Christian workers to buy things that can't easily be shipped from another country.
- If Internet access is available, show kids the onelifekids.org site and explain how families can give to the "One Refugee" project through the site.
- Give everyone a OneLife tag to cut out. Help kids punch holes in the tags and thread yarn through the holes to make lanyards.

Pray

Thank God for generous givers that help Christians help Syrian families.





Tough Times Serving Experience



Prepare

- From the DVD-ROM or kidsonmission.org, print copies of the **Tricky math trick** (one per child plus extras for second attempts and sharing).
- Write the number **34** on an index card and seal the card inside an envelope.

Recap

Years of war have disrupted normal family life for many Syrians. Millions of people have lost their homes, been forced to leave their country and had to settle in crowded refugee camps. Many Syrian kids have not been to school for months or years. They are just trying to survive. Christians are providing practical and spiritual help to Syrian families so they can see God at work in very hard times.

Very tricky!

- Distribute copies of the **Tricky math trick** sheet.
- Help kids follow the instructions and total the four numbers they circled on their grid.
- Dramatically call for kids to do a drum roll on the table with their hands as you reveal the answer in the sealed envelope. (When the steps are followed correctly, the sum of the four circled numbers will always be 34.)
- If time permits, hand out extra blank grids and let kids try the trick again. Give everyone a blank to take home so they can teach the trick to someone else.

You can teach, too!

- Prompt kids to recall the availability of education for Syrian kids in refugee camps (*limited at best; many kids have not been to school for a long time*).
- Explain that tutoring kids is one way many Christian workers make friends with boys and girls. While they're teaching practical skills, they can also teach about Jesus!
- Explain that everyone in your Kids on Mission group has a knowledge or a skill they can teach others. Call for volunteers to share things they could teach — both paper-and-pencil and practical skills (*math, spelling, cooking, pet care, how to shoot a basketball*).
- Challenge kids to seek opportunities to be teachers, for instance, when a friend has been absent from class or when an adult needs help mastering a smart phone or tablet computer.
- Remind them that it's very important to teach others what we learn about Jesus, too. Encourage kids to teach others the Bible stories and spiritual truths they are learning.

Pray

Invite a volunteer to ask God to provide Syrian kids with opportunities to learn.



Tough Times Going Further



More ideas using this theme

- Download and print the **Tough Times parent letter**. Give to parents so they can continue investigating this theme as a family.
- Search “Syria” on **imb.org** and review how Christians are responding to this crisis.
- Encourage older children to do online research about Syria and the recent war. Give them time to share what they learned with the rest of the group. Pray together for the Syrian crisis and Christian workers there.
- Bring a laundry basket, a carry-on size suitcase and a plastic store shopping bag. Show one item at a time and lead kids to determine, if they were required to leave home quickly due to dangerous circumstances, what they would pack if the item was the only carrier available. Help kids recognize that missionaries and humanitarian aid groups can help provide families with necessary and small comfort items they had to leave behind.
- Don’t forget to visit **kidsonmission.org** for more activities and KOM experiences you might have missed. Also, like us on Facebook and see how other churches are using KOM.