

## Mawuli's miracle

Mawuli lives in Allada, Benin, in West Africa. When Mawuli was a little girl, her father and mother got sick and died. There was no one to take care of her so a friend took her to *La Casa Grande*. That means The Big House.

At *La Casa Grande*, Mawuli found people who loved her and took care of her. She made friends and went to school. She studied very hard because she dreamed of becoming a journalist or a lawyer. In Benin you have to take a big test to get into university. To take the test you need to show your birth certificate.

But Mawuli didn't have her birth certificate. Bienvenu, the leader at *La Casa Grande* didn't want Mawuli to give up on her dreams. He wanted to help find her family so that Mawuli could get a birth certificate.

First, he prayed that God would help him. Then, he followed the only clue he had—the name of Mawuli's mother's village. There, Bienvenu found Mawuli's grandmother! But she was still angry at Mawuli's mother for something that happened a long time ago. She wouldn't answer any of Bienvenu's questions. The grandmother was so upset that she started yelling and let slip Mawuli's father's name and his home village. Now there was another clue!

Bienvenu followed the clue and traveled to Mawuli's father's village. He found Mawuli's uncle!

Back at *La Casa Grande*, Mawuli was very happy to know she had a family. But she still didn't have a birth certificate.

Both her mother's and her father's family needed to come to the courthouse in her town to confirm who Mawuli was. Because the families didn't get along, Bienvenu decided not to

tell them that both families were coming. He prayed that God would work things out to help get Mawuli's birth certificate.

On their way into town, the two families met while crossing the river in a canoe! They realized that God had brought them together on the boat and then they hugged instead of fighting. They all went to the courthouse together. This was just what Bienvenu had prayed for.

The family feud was over, but Mawuli still didn't have her birth certificate. It usually takes the court three months to do the paperwork. But God worked in the courthouse, too. Her family went to court on Friday and her birth certificate was ready on Monday.

Now, Mawuli has both her birth family and her *La Casa Grande* family. She can go to university and become whatever God calls her to be. She says, "God is powerful. I know God has a plan for my life because I received an unexpected miracle."

### Prayer

*Dear God, thank you for helping Mawuli find her family and her birth certificate. We are grateful for her trust in you! Help us to also trust you in difficult times. In Jesus' name, amen.*

### Activity: Watch the video about Mawuli's miracle!

[www.mennonitemission.net/Stories/Multimedia/Pages/Mawulismiracle.aspx](http://www.mennonitemission.net/Stories/Multimedia/Pages/Mawulismiracle.aspx)



Photo by Lynda Hollinger-Janzen

**A bright future**—God used *La Casa Grande* in Benin to give Mawuli hope and a bright future.

### Our gifts can help support mission in Benin.

**\$100** helps to provide job training for young adults as they prepare to enter the working world.

**\$50** helps to provide a child with education, health care, food, and clothing for a month.

**\$40** helps to provide school supplies for one child.

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**Gift designation.** All gifts to support ministries in Benin should be sent to Mennonite Mission Network, PO Box 370, Elkhart, IN 46515-0370. Please indicate that the funds are for "**Mission Bank: Benin**" or "**Project #1520.**"

▶ For more activities and stories, visit [www.MennoniteMission.net/BeninMissionBank](http://www.MennoniteMission.net/BeninMissionBank).



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## Never too young

*“Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”*  
—Matthew 10:14

Ten-year-old Boko looked around her classroom. Heads and shoulders towered above her as she sat among adults at the Benin Bible Institute. But Doréa didn't mind. She listened carefully to what the Mennonite Mission Network professor, Anne Garber Kompaoré, said about God. Doréa heard how much God loves her, how much God loves everyone, regardless of where they live, who they are friends with, or what they do. And now Anne was telling the class that they ought to show that same love to everyone, not just to friends.

After class, Doréa took her notebook and pencil under her arm and, squeezing through the brightly colored dresses and danshikis (loose-fit shirts and pants), she slipped out the door, following Anne.

“Excuse me,” Doréa said. “Do you have a minute?”

Anne turned around. “Yes, what can I help you with?” Anne had seen Doréa listening in class, but she didn't realize that Doréa was listening so closely and taking pages of notes. The two sat on the steps leading out of the classroom and talked about God.

Since Benin Bible Institute began, more than 1,000 students have graduated, and all of them are adults. Some are young adults without children, while others are older with grown children.

But as the only child there, Doréa isn't intimidated. She knows that Jesus wanted children to come and learn about God's love. She remembers that Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them.” Because God's good news is for all ages.

### Questions for discussion

1. Think of a time when you, like Doréa, were in a room full of adults. What did that feel like?
2. How do you think that Doréa felt? Why do you think she still went to class?
3. Have you ever been the oldest in a group of children? What are ways that you can make the younger children feel welcome?

### Prayer

*Dear Jesus, thank you for Doréa and her courage to learn about you. Help us to continue to learn about you, even when we feel alone. Amen.*

### Activity: Learn to speak Fon!

Although French is the official language in Benin, many people speak the language, *Fon*. Repeat these pronunciations to learn simple greetings:

Good morning! (Did you wake up well?) . . . . AH-FON ghan-jee-ah  
ah-FON ghan-JEE-ah?

Morning response (Yes, I woke up well.) . . . . Eeen, une-FON ghan-JEE.

How are you? . . . . . ah-DOH ghan-JEE-ah?

Good bye! . . . . . OH-dah-boh



Photo provided

**You're never too young**—Doréa Boko reads at Benin Bible Institute.

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## Following God's call

*"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening."*

—1 Samuel 3:10

For more context, read 1 Samuel, chapter 3.

Have you ever wondered where your food comes from? Those vibrant oranges and tomatoes on the grocery store shelf? They come from somewhere, and most times it's not from your grandma's garden!

Just like in the United States, markets in Cotonou, Benin, burst with all kinds of food, grown by hundreds of gardeners, just outside the city. Janet Stucky, who works for Mennonite Mission Network, visits the gardeners often. There are rows and rows of sweet potatoes, corn, tomatoes, and bell peppers. In the distance, trees are filled with avocados and mangos for people to eat.

When Janet would eat with her friends, she noticed that foods like corn and rice were common, but there weren't many fruits and vegetables on the table.

So together with her co-worker, Rigobert Sossa, Janet invited a group of gardeners to learn about the importance of eating healthy fruits and vegetables. Nearly 100 gardeners came! "Praise God for their desire to lead healthy lives!" Janet said in response.

Together, the gardeners learned that by eating plenty of fruits and vegetables, their bodies will get all of the important nutrients they need to grow strong and healthy.

But it can sometimes be expensive to buy enough fruits and vegetables to fill growing stomachs. Raphaël Edou, who was a leader at Bethesda Hospital where Janet works, understands this and knows that sometimes "knowledge alone is not enough."

That's why, with Mennonite Mission Network, Raphaël followed God's call and began a small community bank years ago. The bank lets men and women borrow money to begin their own businesses.

Now, more Beninese families can grow to be strong and healthy, because they know the importance of healthy eating and are able to buy healthy food with the money they make from their own businesses.

### Questions for discussion

1. In this story, what did Janet, Rigobert and Raphaël do to help others? Why did they help in this way?
2. In the Bible verse, we read about how Samuel was called by God. If God calls mission workers, and people like Janet, Rigobert, Raphaël, and children like Samuel to help others, how do you think that God might be calling you to help others?

### Prayer

*Dear Jesus,*

*Open our eyes to see where we can help others; give us the compassion to listen and follow your call to help. Amen.*

### Activity: Explore God's call

Mission work can take place in many different ways. Invite someone from your church to come talk about how God called them to do mission work in another country, in another state, or in their current work. Before they speak, write down questions as a group to ask them.



Photo courtesy of Janet Stucky

**Following God's call**—Janet Stucky helps teach about healthy eating.

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